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Literature

E0945S

SERIOUS REFLECTIONS

AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS.

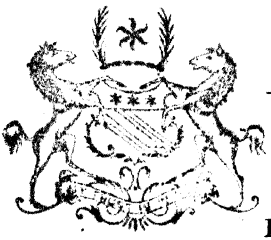
BY THE LATE

GEORGE-ABERIGH MACKAY,

UNDER THE NOM DE PLUME

OF

OUR POLITICAL ORPHAN.



BOMBAY:

BOMBAY GAZETTE STEAM PRESS, RAMPART ROW, FORT.

1881.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

No. I.—Some Serious Reflections 1–248

No. XXXIV.—The Teapot Series.—Social Dissection 249

No. XXXV.—Sahib 259

No. XXXVI.—The Gaiety Theatre.—A Copy of Verses 269

No. XXXVII.—A Sonnet 273

No. XXXVIII.—The Gryphon's Anabasis... 277

No. XXXIX.—The Orphan's Good Resolutions 285

No. XL.—Some Occult Phenomena... ... 297

SOME SERIOUS REFLECTIONS.

No. I.

SOME SERIOUS REFLECTIONS.

(*February* 16, 1880.)

THE Government of India is profoundly stirred. Mr. Lepel Griffin has been sent to Kabul; and the *Pioneer* is striking attitudes of constrained reticence. If the insurgents at Kabul and Ghazni are not intimidated by the approach of Mr. Lepel Griffin, it must be attributed to their moral insensibility. The Government of India means it as an extraordinary warning both to the British army engaged in this second campaign and to the enemy. No Lepel Griffin was vouchsafed by the then inclement Government to the Perak war; no Lepel Griffin has been sent to the Rumpa rebellion. But Griffin goes to Kabul; and nobody so pleased with the arrangement as

Griffin. Sowars will ride behind him; and his name will be associated with the war. This is the fair guerdon which he hopes to find, thinking to burst out into a sudden blaze of political importance. With the Gryphon at Kabul, Mr. Durand will be rather in the position of the Mock Turtle. But they should strengthen his position with a C.I.E., or give him precedence over Comptroller-Generals in Afghanistan.

***

THE Famine Commission having fallen into the depths of universal ridicule, only to be dragged out once more to be embalmed in jeers and laughter when the conflicting reports of the Commissioners are published, —a census is going to be made for one of the party. The others will be provided with stars, special commissions, and other playthings. They might give Yakub Khan and a house at Simla to Henry Cunningham.

***

SIR GARNET WOLSELEY'S appointment to the Commander-in-Chiefship will be a terrible blow to the Simla gang. Men who have hung about the Simla Club for the last ten seasons and are

on dancing terms with the wives of all the Secretaries and Under-Secretaries will now be relegated to regimental duty. I could name at least twenty men who will certainly be wiped out. Tears will be shed over this.

***

THIS talk of General Roberts's atrocities at Kabul is, of course, in itself beneath all contempt,—the foolish and malicious ranting of idle busy-bodies at home; but it does harm. It does harm to us in India; it does harm to us on the Continent of Europe; and this reflection will unquestionably be a satisfaction to the class from which it emanates. Many of General Roberts's friends will be inclined to think that if he had treated the Press with greater candour from the beginning the London Society for the Propagation of Disaffection in India would not have got hold of this cry.

***

AT the same time an attempt to make capital out of the medical treatment of the Kabulis by our army surgeons is simply ridiculous. People who say they believe that General Roberts is a Kaufmann in the sheep's clothing of an English general officer will

not be led to abandon their position by an assurance that pills are being freely distributed at Kabul. They will say, in their wicked, jesting way, that pills distributed among the Banias of Kabul will be a poor satisfaction to the friends of the Kotwal and others who lie cold under the gallows of Sherpur. Opening Brown's bowels hardly atones for the execution of Smith, when mistaken for Robinson, who fought and bled for his Faith and his Country.

***

THE Political Department is in a state of flux. The graded system is being done away with; appointments are being reduced; and the bumptiousness of agents and assistants is everywhere at a discount. I know an agent of sixteen stone in his stockings and eleven guns in his agency who has come down in his own social thermometer to 79°; general officers being 80°, Colonels 60° and the cool of the morning in commerce and literature 25°. As I write telegrams come flashing in from Rajputana and Central India,—"Political Agents falling." If any of your readers have invested nephews in the Political Department,

I would advise them to sell out: grandfathers in the Staff Corps is a safer speculation. I shed a tear for the rapidly decomposing swagger of a Department that could do good work when not blinded and paralysed by a rabid and dropsical vanity. To see a man who has been intoxicated with Rajas and a cocked hat, suffering from the nausea and "hot coppers" of reduced pay is a spectacle that calls for the tenderest pity.

* * *

Lord Lytton's "Personal Attendant," Mr. Batten, writes to the accomplished Secretary of the Theosophical Society to say that "H. E. is glad to find a society of Western origin devoting itself with such zeal to the pursuit of Indian Philosophy."— H. E. does these courtesies very nicely. It is certainly very creditable to people who are perhaps past the romantic period of life, and who are unacquainted (as I believe) with the Sanscrit language to leave the opening world of spiritualism in America for a groping among the tombs of Vedic lore.

* * *

The Madrassees and their Duke are at

logger-heads again. If people will keep a Duke they must take the consequences. They must submit to be snubbed and sat upon; nay, they must learn to like it. When Dukes tread upon people's toes they expect smiles. Here lies the specific difference between dukes and editors. The Government of India even is snubbed by the Duke of Buckingham and Ootacamand. Look at what the Duke calls his "Rebellion!" What other Governor, I should like to know, would be allowed to indulge in such a scandalous *tamasha* for a single day! But the more the Government of India objects, the more eagerly does the Duke return to his fireworks, making them flame on the forehead of astonished day.

* * *

So it is not true that the Viceroy is desirous of resigning; certainly not. His Excellency would much rather accept a prolonged tenure of office. His work is not yet complete. Afghanistan is not yet partitioned out among the unhung Kabuli chiefs and settled quietly under an Agent to the Governor-General; the climate of India is not yet so modified by practical meteorology and weather returns as to

render Famine impossible; the Imperial finances have not yet been so completely muddled by little John as to render it impossible for any one to tell whether there is a surplus or a deficit. Mr. Whitley Stokes has finished his Indian fairy tales, but his codification will not be completed for many generations, certainly not before Mr. Whitley Stokes has ceased from troubling and become an angel somewhere or other; and the Peterhoff circle has still to be educated; it can show its pretty teeth and ankles, it can coruscate smiles and glances, but it cannot talk, it cannot be amusing, it cannot smoke a cigarette. So my Lord sits moodily thinking for days without talking, and then talking for days without thinking,—oppressed by the burthen of a greatness to which no one is born. He is not pining away: there is still a fire in those languid eyes. Dr. Barnett sits with folded hands, he has not even a tooth to stuff, or a tubercle to play with. I see no symptoms of retirement. Perhaps Lord Beaconsfield would like to make one more Governor-General of India before joining Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; perhaps some of his friends would like him to try his skill in

the selection of the fittest once more; but the suggestion of a change will come from London and not from Calcutta. Many disappointed people would be glad if Lord Lytton went away; they would like to have the cards shuffled once more; but many more would be exceedingly sorry, for Lord Lytton commands the magic of genius and culture, and if the Caliban of the Press annoys him sometimes, he can turn always to the legions of gentle spirits who are ever obedient to his will.—(I was sorry to hear that Ariel had been sent to the Andamans.)

No. II.

(*March* 3, 1880.)

FROM the Report of the Director of Public Instruction, N. W. P., for the past year it appears that every student educated in the higher department of the Thomason Engineering College cost five thousand four hundred and fifty-four rupees a year! There are no extras. This includes diamond shirt studs, champagne for *chota hazri*, subscription to the *Court Journal*, old china, lobster salads, cigarettes and pew-rent It is now proposed to affiliate Eton and Christ Church to the Thomason College. Many students would, it is believed, proceed from time to time for change of scene and climate to the older institutions, where the allowance of five thousand four hundred and fifty-four rupees a year might be

sufficient to maintain them in a position of honourable academical poverty. Each student would be attended during his stay in Europe by one of the numerous vice-principals, whose relations to his charge would be similar to those of a Political Agent to a Raja.

* * *

Dr. Cook would run a complete Engineering College, with workshops and brass band, for the sum of money now spent at Rurki on each student.

* * *

You might educate twins at Cooper's Hill, cheering them in the vacations with yachting and grouse-shooting for the sum of money now spent at Rurki on each student.

* * *

Sir John Strachey's Budget speech has quite rehabilitated the Empire on 'Change. If Lord Lytton would give up starring in the provinces, and Lord Beaconsfield give up fighting we should find lots of people ready to lend us money. But no one wants to invest his savings in Delhi durbars, or the Afghan war.

* * *

Sir John Strachey tells me that he intends

taxing Political Agents. Chiefs will henceforth have to pay a heavy licence tax for the privilege of keeping a Political Agent.

* * *

THE Grand Hotel now being built at Berlin is advertised to have in preparation all the latest improvements in religion. The splendid rooms on the first storey, numbered from 1 to 20, will be fitted up as places of worship for Catholics, old and ultramontane; Anglicans high, low, and broad; Jews; both Sadducees and Pharisees; Turks, 2 per cents. and 2½ per cents.; and Theosophists. Downstairs there will be a commodious Hell fitted up with an elegant gambling apparatus. Polyglot croupiers of noble birth will be in attendance. In the central courtyard, a colossal fountain will play the most recent opera-bouffe airs, while flinging a profusion of sparkling wines into the specially-prepared rarified atmosphere; around luxuriant tropical vegetation; everywhere rare song-birds! Celebrated singers will wander up and down the alabaster corridors, warbling their most expansive pieces. In the morning the lake will be available for yachting and bathing; in the afternoon

it will be frozen over for skating. Special trains of Pullman's cars will run every quarter of an hour to the principal places of interest and amusement in Europe. A comfortable cemetery and tastefully laid-out cremation grounds will complete the attractions of this unrivalled establishment. Charges moderate ; hot and cold baths ; no extras !

No. III.

(*March* 6, 1880.)

Dukes in Madras have a melancholy aptitude for making themselves ridiculous. The Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, and the noble families of Grenville, and Temple, and Nugent, and Brydges need not have ordered things at an upholsterer's shop which they did not mean to pay for, and even if they did not wish to pay for the things they had ordered, they need not have courted publicity by dragging their strawberry leaves and ermine into a Court of Justice.

* * *

But, surely, after dragging the Governorship of Madras down to such depths of squalor and

contempt, the Madras Dukes and the noble families of Grenville, and Temple, and Nugent, and Brydges, and Chandos will have the decency to give up their Rumpa rebellion. Great indulgence has already been shown them in this matter; but even a worm will turn, and the Government of India will not suffer its fair name to be trampled upon for ever.

Do the Madras Dukes and the noble families of Grenville, and Temple, and Nugent, and Brydges, and Chandos think to emulate the Governor of Bombay when they make a progress in their canal boat? Sir Richard rides a thousand miles and creates civilisation and a railway in a wild and difficult mountain country, at an infinite gain to the Empire; the Madras Dukes are punted along twenty miles in a canal boat, reading Antony and Cleopatra,—and stick in the mud.

* * *

So Mr. Alfred Lyall is going to Kabul to see that Mr. Lepel Griffin does what he has been told to do! But surely they will send somebody to look after Mr. Alfred Lyall; let me suggest—a Munshi. It is well known that Mr. Alfred Lyall is the white Munshi of the

Government of India ; but it is equally well known that, without a brown Munshi, Mr. Lyall will be like a somnambulist wandering in his night shirt among the flames of an Inferno, as soon as he has turned the corner beyond Peshawur. Mr. Lyall's knowledge of Persian would charm Major Jarrett; but it would be the mystic gift of tongues to an Afghan Chief.

***

I CAN see Lyall and Griffin wandering about among the mountains together quoting poetry and saying smart things. I hope the hilly people will not take it into their heads to effect an apotheosis for these quick witted Secretaries ; for though it could make little difference to the fortunes of Afghanistan whether they were in Heaven or Sherpur, it would make a great difference to Simla during the coming season. Simla can ill afford to lose brains.

***

OF course, you will say there is still Mr. Whitley Stokes—but that is a different thing. You can replace a funny man—the *Pioneer* suggests that Mr. Justice West has secured the reversion of the appointment of Funny Man

to the Government of India—but you can hardly replace the intellectual numen of a Society, —the Pericles.

* * *

Has Lord Lytton's visit to Darjeeling any political significance, think you? You will remember that I predicted the flight of Lepel Griffin and Plowden, the visit to Darjeeling, and a Calico Ball in the event of serious complications arising in Afghanistan. I suppose the Calico Ball will be reserved for the arrival of Mahomed Jan at Kabul.

* * *

But who could have foreseen that things would ever grow so serious as to lead the Commander-in-Chief to threaten a visit to Peshawur! What a panic there would have been in Mahomed Jan's camp and in Abdul Rahman's camp if Sir Frederick had really gone to the mouth of the Khyber! I am really thankful, nevertheless, that these desperate counsels have not prevailed. Why lead trumps in this foolhardy way? Why not play the knave of hearts? He is now at Darjeeling.

* * *

Poor old Sir Frederick! poor old man! what

a packing and unpacking he must have had, and all for these rascally Afghans! I hear he had dozens of Balaclava caps and slippers and sofa cushions worked for him at the last moment. How the Duke of Cambridge's heart will bleed for him when he hears of all the trouble he has been put to! And now they want him to go up to Lahore with the Viceroy in April! Why, Lahore in April is most deadly; there is always bronchitis, or glanders, or catarrh lurking about Anarkally in that month. An officiating Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master General died there in April some years ago.

* * *

I WONDER they do not make more play with Sir Robert Egerton. They should work him up and down between Delhi and Peshawur, amid the mild coruscations of the Press Commissioner's summer lighting, when they wish the attention of the public to be drawn away from Sir Frederick Roberts. I hear, on the best authority, that Roberts is only waiting for such an opportunity to execute a newspaper correspondent, who is giving trouble. But take care, friend Roberts,

pills will not atone for this. Stick to your Kotwals.

* * *

YES, my dear Editor, I remember that good Sir Robert weighs fifteen stone, and is a man not to be trifled with. I once lent him one of my Lord's yaboos at Simla, and it spread out under him like a camel on a mud-bank; but then he is Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab, and he can travel in a state coach with cream-colored horses, or in a dooly borne by Deputy Commissioners, if he pleases.

No. IV.

(*March* 22, 1880.)

THE Archdeacon of Calcutta takes precedence of the Akhoond of Swat and the Jam of Lus Beyla, yet his paltry outfit-allowance of £500 is subject to reduction at the whim of an unbelieving Secretary of State! The people of India will blush to see their Archdeacons buying aprons, shovel-hats, and other religious apparatus at a co-operative store.

* * *

SIR RICHARD is gone! How quiet the Empire seems! The Telegraph wires hang listless from their posts; the post-bags are emaciated; the newspapers are empty; the peasantry of Bengal and the Dekkan eat a square meal once more, feeling—'Famine be blowed.' We experience that half-melancholy stillness which

descends upon a house when young Hopeful returns to school. No one will ever know what I feel in losing Sir Richard (sobs). I shall never smile again. He has been meat and drink to me for twelve years. Columbine, Pantaloon, and Harlequin can go now ; for the shouting is over; the lights grow dim ; the laughter is silenced for ever. No grief is so overpowering as that arising out of the void left by departed joys,—" a drowsy, stifled, unimpassioned grief."

* * *

You offer me Mr. Stokes :—no, no. Take him away, I have seen Grimaldi. I will laugh no more.

* * *

Mr. Ashburner must feel rather cold up there among the Gods. You should say something about him now and then. Say you think he is looking ill ; and advise him not to overwork himself ; recommend a change to the hills ; laugh at him softly. They like it. There is a touch of nature about this which is wanting in the debates of Council and in the whispers of the long-skirted *chôbdars*. It was this constant reference to his weak humanity

that forged the link of association between Sir Richard and me. I was like a mother-in-law to him.

***

You might, for instance, point out to the Hon'ble Lionel Robert that "Councillor [sic] of Her Majesty the Queen and Empress of India," as he styles the dear departed one in his proclamation, is incorrect. A councillor is a member of a council; but a counsellor is one who gives counsel or advice. This any one can learn for about one rupee eight annas from a dictionary; the lesson, however, which money cannot teach, unless invested in this number of the *Bombay Gazette*, is that the title which was created with the Empire was *counsellor of the Empress*. The introduction, moreover, of the words "Her Majesty" was altogether contrary to usage. Lionel should buy Smith on Proclamations.

***

I HOPE it is really true that the vast putrid corpse of the Chinese Empire is about to be exploded by foul gases generated within itself. The Russian vulture will then alight upon the Northern provinces and gorge itself; becoming

more unwieldy and impotent than ever; and out of the rest low organisms will arise—Burmahs, Siams, Assams, Bhotans—all blown upon by the cancerous breath of corruption-bread despotism. But what will become of the poor little Bogy-Emperor? Will he be dragged out of his wonderland palace with his Dragons and Pendragons, Mandarins and Teapots, Fans and Empresses to be handed over for torture to the Fie-Fee-Foh-Fum Department? Or will he be embalmed with creeping things in the slime of immemorial mythology and buried under pagodas for worship? But then, how about Harry Rivett-Carnac and the Treaties? Shall we be able to sell our opium?

***

How difficult it is to know what to believe. Baron Reuter telegraphs to the *Pioneer* to say that Lord Derby *disclaims* his adhesion to the Liberal Party; and he telegraphs to the *Times of India* to say that he *declares* his adhesion. Either word is rather inappropriate; but the electric telegraph is a bad proof reader; however, it might have stuck to one, or the other of them. We want a revelation in politics as we have one in religion. It was expected that

the Press Commissioner would prove an Apocalypt; but the Press Commissioner seems to be fading away, like the Cheshire cat. There is nothing left now but the grin.

* * *

A FRIEND who has lately returned from Bombay tells me it is just possible that the Gaiety Theatre may not turn out commercially a greater success than the Prince's Dock, or the Back Bay. Why don't you have a subscription *bal masqué* for it after Lent? It would give you a month of anecdotes; and then, my dear Editor, you might go as the Bishop and do, or say, anything. A Bishop is licensed.

No. V.

(*March* 27, 1880.)

WHAT a comfortable livelihood Archdeacon Baly might have made by writing for the press under the old-fashioned terms of a penny-a-line! The smallest thought that vibrates through his brain requires a newspaper column for its expression. What might almost pass in another for unconscious cerebration when occurring in the Archdeacon clothes itself in long sentences,—black coat and hat sentences, —respectable middle-class sentences signifying nothing decently and grammatically.

* * *

EVERYTHING that Archdeacon Baly is now saying about schools for Eurasians and "Mean Whites" has been said already far more forcibly and succinctly by Inspectors of Schools and Directors of Public Instruction. This is

the age of mushroom reports growing out of ostentatious and perfunctory investigation. I am writing a Report on Bubble Commissions.

***

I HEAR that the Government of India people are going to break loose from the guidance of the *Pioneer*, and start an evening paper for themselves, to be called the *Chiffonnier*. Mr. Lyall, "sequacious of the Lyre," has taken the *Poet's Corner* on lease; Mr. Stokes has received a contract for the attic salt (much, I hear, to Mr. Halsey's disgust); Dr. Hunter and General Richard will do the Home Adulation Correspondence; and the general Jingo business, in leading-type, will be undertaken by specially prepared Under-Secretaries blown upon by the favouring whispers of My Lord. What we now sniff contemptuously at as the paltry bavardage of the Bureaucratic Enclosure at Calcutta and Simla will twinkle forth into glorious type in the *Chiffonnier*; and the antiquated stories and the anile gossip of the circles will pass for conversation, when glorified by the art of printing.

***

THE Government of India has long wanted

an organ, and it advertised some time ago for a St. Cecilia; but nobody came forward except the inevitable Councillor with his contumacious piccolo. However by contribution an organ could be got together. Bombay might offer Sir Richard's trumpet, which he used to play upon so bravely (I am not thinking of any of the Bombay papers, you sly dog). Then there is Mr. Justice West, who is full of harmonies: his *vox humana* stop is, I know, at the disposal of the Government of India; and if its music is in a state of flux, he will certainly not be unwilling to crystallise and codify it.

* * *

INSTEAD of forming a Mounted Volunteer Corps in Bombay, why not turn one Company of the present corps into Mounted Infantry? For, as I heard my friend Captain Tennent once observe—"Horsey infantry is better than footy cavalry."

* * *

MR. GRIFFIN must now indeed be in that way in which Under-Secretaries and Politicals love to be. He is about a month gone with a secret. He alone knows what is to be done with Afghanistan,—whether it is to be parti-

tioned out among cut-throat Chiefs, or added to the Political charge of General Kaufmann, or turned into a Preserve for own Politicals.

***

THE fact that Brigadier-General Nation, our Konomia hero, has not been made a K. C. B. fills his friends with alarm. Now-a-days this is equivalent to a severe reprimand. It is well understood in the charmed circles that the Madras Dukes are going to get medals for the glorious Rumpa Rebellion.

***

WHEN will the English public have enough of Archibald Forbes' bluster and swagger? Half approving, half laughing, they have cheered him on to a point of extravagance and fury that almost borders on insanity. His insolent reference in the *Nineteenth Century* to Dr. Bourke's correspondence deserved a horse-whip; and I fear that the complete exposure of the untruthfulness and absurdity of what he wrote by Dr. Bourke's letter to the *Standard* will fall lightly on the noisy correspondent's hide.

***

DR. BOURKE saw certain cruelties perpetrat-

ed on wounded Afghans at Charasiab by Goorkhas, and he very properly reported them. His charges were denied; but a Court of Enquiry confirmed their truth. Mr. Forbes says, in what is happily his own peculiar blood-and-thunder style:—"A case occurred the other day in Afghanistan in which a correspondent branded with atrocious cruelty the soldiers of a noble regiment; *he has owned to his lie.*" How delighted the audience of a low music hall when in the Jingo stage of tipsiness would be with this denunciation!

* * *

ARCHIBALD FORBES is a brave and healthy Englishman with great powers of describing vividly what he sees; but that is no reason why any special licence to say the thing which is not and to slander brother correspondents should be accorded him.

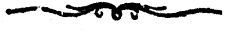
* * *

THE Goorkhas in our service are glorious little fellows, of whom all Englishmen may well be proud; but if they are caught sprinkling powder over wounded Afghans and burning them to death, I think they ought to be reported and punished. General Roberts may

say that they don't mean anything by it, that it is merely their light-heartedness; but this seems an inadequate defence. There are transports of cussedness, which, even when breaking out in the most amiable and cheerful people, must be moderated. This apothegm applies, I think, equally to Mr. Forbes and to the Goorkhas.

* * *

After many months of consideration it has been discovered that the Press Commissioner belongs to the Foreign and not to the Home Office, and that his establishment can be reduced to the very modest equipment of two Baboos. I fear that this beautiful thing has begun to fade away. Very soon nothing will be left but amiable Mr. Buckland in an open frock coat and white hat smiling over the ruins of what was once denounced as an engine of unutterable despatism.



No. VI.

(*April* 3, 1880.)

THE Commander-in-Chief has started at last! He goes to the seats of Bliss on Jakko, not to the seat of war. It would not do to have any one at Kabul who could eclipse Griffin. But it is a great thing that the Commander-in-Chief has left Calcutta: it proves that the Government of India is not so palsied as it looks. It was not easy to start off H. E.: it was a painful throe. There were many preliminary pangs that quivered all over the Empire in excruciating telegrams; but yet he remained; and one felt that he would always remain. Now a profound sense of relief steals over us as we take up a newspaper, and we say—"Thank Lord Lytton that the Commander-in-Chief has actually started, and will be the subject of no more paragraphs till they begin to start him back to Calcutta again at the end of the season." It is a great responsibility

keeping a Commander-in-Chief. One always feels,—"What if anything should happen to him!"

* * *

It is pleasant to turn from the Commander-in-Chief and the Government of India to Mr. Kirkham and the Malabar Reservoir, from the dull constipation of the Empire to the gay volubility of the Town. Wherever you take up Mr. Kirkham's speech,—in the paper of Monday or in the paper of Saturday,—you see the same quick stream of thought and bright ripple of fancy, accompanied by tears and laughter and the interruptions of Mr. Nowrojee Furdoonjee and Mr. Dosabhoy Framjee, who are like the rustic of whom Horace speaks —waiting for the river to flow by; but *labitur et labetur, &c.*

* * *

So Colonel Ponsonby Cox from being Military Secretary to the Bombay Commander-in-Chief becomes Chairman of the Port Trust! These changes make one feel quite giddy. When I was a boy this kind of thing was only done in a circus, where Signorina Arabella Cavalleressa, dancing on a galloping piebald,

gradually divested herself of her clothing, and passed through a series of metamorphoses from cloaked and booted brigandage to bare-legged Robroymacgregorhood.

* * *

GEORGE, RANGER, says that military officers are not to write for the papers from the seat of war. George often says very foolish things; and this is one of the best of them. Why, it will be no war at all unless General Roberts and all his staff write it up. What would the Abyssinian, Ashanti and Zulu campaigns have been without the indefatigable puffing of every one engaged in them?—They wouldn't have been worth a C. M. G.!

* * *

MODERN British campaigns are farmed out to the papers and publishers. If the papers won't have them they are nothing. The Perak war cost more suffering and loss of life, was more interesting and heroic than the Ashanti war, yet no one ever hears of it; and the authorities at home have been most unwilling to grant a medal for it. If it had been let out to a good war correspondent, it would have been food for jingoism for ever. George,

Ranger, thoroughly concurs with me as to this. George's heart is in the right place; and when he ceases to be Commander-in-Chief of the British army, these Brummagem wars will break out all over the world; and we shall not have a single officer in the service honorably distinguished by being undecorated.

* * *

BELIEVE me, my dear Editor, this decoration business is lowering our standard of duty, and covering us with shame and ridicule.

* * *

IT is no news that Herat and Kandahar are to be separated from Kabul; and the announcement might have been made by General Roberts much more effectively than by the Punjab Secretary. Afghan chiefs think very small beer of civilians, even when they have sowars riding behind them.

* * *

I THINK that Lord Beaconsfield promised there would be no *annexation* in Afghanistan. Kandahar will therefore be permanently *occupied*.

* * *

INSTEAD of giving Herat to Persia it would

be much wiser to give it to the Nizam, in exchange for Haidrabad. Sir Salar Jung would, of course, be Resident, and Mr. Kay his First Assistant.

* * *

HAIDRABAD and the Berars would form a neat little Lieutenant-Governorship, and would suit Mr. Alfred Lyall down to the ground.

* * *

WITH Abdul Rahman on the throne of Kabul, we could work an Intelligence Department in Russian Turkistan that would paralyse Kaufmann. A Russian can do nothing if he is watched.

* * *

THE most difficult territory to dispose of will be Kafiristan and the adjacent Provinces. The fatal error which the Government of India is itching to commit is to hand over this territory to Cashmir.

* * *

THE Madras Fine Arts Exhibition has been a great success. The painting of the Duke's triumphal progress in the canal barge is a grand historical work. The barge has just run aground; and thousands of ducal *bhisties* are

emptying their *mashqs* into the canal to float the Duke, who is throwing his greatness overboard to lighten the vessel.

***

THE young Maha Rao Raja of Alwar proposes, it is said, visiting England. Unless very judiciously managed this will probably do him a great deal more harm than good. If he is treated at home as a sovereign and not as a great feudal noble, it will be quite impossible for any Political Agent to manage him and his affairs hereafter. English people are apt to run a little wild about Royalties; and crowds of enthusiastic white men making holiday to see him, cheering him and uncovering their heads might well turn the head of the most modest and promising young Indian Chief.

***

IT is all very well for the King of Siam to go to England. He is on speaking terms with the *Daily Telegraph*; indeed he has just given the White Elephant to our old friend Edwin Arnold. His visit to England will be a boon to the readers of that impulsive and warm-hearted daily. They will be able to learn in

an easy and familiar way, while sitting on the knife-board of their omnibus, all that the Londoner cares to know about Asia generally, or Siam in particular.

* * *

I SEE in my *Gazette* that a servant at the Esplanade Hotel was convicted of stealing "a sovereign valued at Rs. 12." Surely this is a very humourous way of alluding to the depreciation of silver and the rate of exchange, and of transferring English ideas to Anglo-Indian modes of thought. I congratulate the Reporter. He has turned an incident, otherwise only interesting to the owner of the sovereign and to the man who stole it, into a matter of universal amusement and reflection.—Who valued the sovereign at Rs. 12?—The thief? How demoralising a high rate of exchange may become! If silver had been at par and the sovereign only worth Rs. 10, probably the guilty *hamal* would not have stolen it; but would have remained an honest *hamal* and would have finally gone to Heaven, first turning to the right.

No. VII.

(*April* 20, 1880.)

WHEN trying to assassinate the Liberal party, the splendid political bandit has blown out his own brains. I use the word "bandit" in a flattering sense;—with reference to the picturesque freedom and boldness of a career that repudiates the conventionalism of dull respectability.

* * *

WE all shed a tear in private over the departed glories of jingoing Imperialism. There will be no more little wars and little heroes for a time; there will be no more splendid chicanery and intrigue; there will be no more parliamentary stock-jobbing; and there will be no more shifting of our neighbours' landmarks. Speeches delivered from the Ministerial benches will no longer be marked by evasion, preva-

rication, and a general disregard of the thing that is.

***

But in place of a fine prodigality of dull truth and dingy respectability, in place of a Lotharian profusion of treasure and a Machiavellian exercise of occult power, we shall have a want of political imagination, a narrowness of purpose, and a poverty of resource that will reduce the prestige and influence of the Empire to the limits of our own frontiers, until England dwindles once more into a far-away island half-lost mid stormy seas.

***

To the savage races of Africa the change of Ministry will bring the blessings of peace. Intrigue in Europe and bloodshed in Africa will no longer be the *mot d'ordre*. The Liberals will not seek for military glory from naked savages; they will rather seek to clothe them in moral pocket-handkerchiefs, and teach them the blessings of a mild communion of interests with Birmingham and Manchester. Death, riding on a white horse, in the person of Sir Garnet Wolsely, will be

withdrawn for a time from those unhappy hunting grounds.

***

Lord Lytton's services were probably never so highly valued in India as they are at this moment. Many people disapprove of his Afghan policy; but now that we are committed to it, all would wish to see it carried out to some decisive and definite issue. Our supremacy must be established in Afghanistan, and the conflicting interests of jealous tribes and chiefs must be reduced to a state of equilibrium. The harum-scarum Duke of Argyll and the rabble of pseudo-humanitarian sand atrocity-mongers offer us a future full of horrors, making us readily acquiesce in anything that can pretend to a policy.

***

If Lord Lytton can effect a tripartite distribution of power in Afghanistan, and establish the authority of his successors at Kandahar, Herat, and Kabul, his name will slide down the ages in tones of respect; and in Hades Lord Ellenborough will retire into the back-

ground and cease to talk about Somnath. Lord Auckland, too, will be nowhere.

* * *

I HEAR that Mr. Lepel Griffin is going to receive the title of Musk-i-Alam, or Fragrance of the World.

* * *

THE labours of the Famine Commission continue unabated. Mr. Elliott and General Strachey work together for long hours at the India Office every day condensing the report. I have heard it stated, on most excellent authority, that their present labours are costing the people of India upwards of one thousand pounds sterling a week. When completed their blue-book is expected to equal, if not surpass, the Hunting of the Snark, as a work of practical statesmanship; and a commission on two thousand pounds sterling a week is to be appointed to read it. This Commission will afterwards be examined on what they have read by Archdeacon Baly and the Akhoond of Swat.

* * *

MR. CAIRD has written a minute on the

General Administration of India, which has been printed and distributed among the local Governments. It is marked "confidential," and is, perhaps, the crudest and wildest document that has ever found its way into the Secretariats. Mr. Caird thinks it would be a good plan to do away with the Indian Civil Service and substitute officers selected from European regiments who may have served not less than ten years in India. Mr. Caird has observed, while in the East, that officers of European regiments are more sympathetic with Asiatics than Civilians!

* * *

YES, I have at length joined the Society for the Suppression of Mr. Caird.

* * *

SIR ASHLEY EDEN wants us to include Mr. Buck and the agricultural section of the Home Office in the programme of the Society.

* * *

THEY have been wigging Sir Ashley for neglecting to acclimatise flower seeds and to introduce chemical manures and American

ploughs into Lower Bengal. Nothing is too great or too small for the Government of India. While tearing out the bowels of Afghanistan, it can simper over Mr. Buck and a sprig of mignonette, and bandy words with Sir Ashley Eden about the use and abuse of sewage.

* * *

Not many months ago Lord Lytton communicated to the Secretary of State a serious proposal for the immediate abolition of the Covenanted Civil Service. This is an undeniable fact, startling as it sounds.

* * *

In place of the Civil Service there was to be a body of persons selected by the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. (The well-known refrain in *Pinafore* probably indicates the principle of selection.) This proposal offers unquestionable advantages; the ship would be more handy when manned by nominees. The rights, the traditions, and the special knowledge of the Civil Service stand between many fairy visions that rise before Viceroys and Secretaries of State and their realisation. But the Civil Service, with its vested rights and

with its deep and permanent interest in the country, supplies ballast that cannot be safely dispensed with.

***

HOWEVER, I admire Lord Lytton for the boldness and independence of the proposed *coup d'état* that would give absolute power to the Secretary of State and the Viceroy—

> Quod sideficiant vires, audacia certe
> Laus erit : in magnis et voluisse sat est.

***

THERE can be no greater mistake than to suppose that Lord Lytton is a mere dreamer and sayer of smart things. There is a hot tincture of war and revolution in his blood. He "hears the heavens filled with shouting;" his heart pulsates with "the standards of the people plunging through the thunderstorm." But "the common-sense of most must hold this fretful Lord in awe."

***

I AM delighted to see that Mr. Ashburner finds himself "at home" in Government House, Malabar Hill, but I think it is un-

necessary to assure the people of Bombay of the fact so often, bringing forward Mr. Radcliffe as a witness. Mr. Ashburner is one who would be "at home" anywhere, even in Peterhoff.

***

It is true that the Bishop is going to act for Mr. Pinhey.

No. VIII.

(*April* 24, 1880.)

THE Malabar Reservoir case stirs me deeply. Three columns in close type about it hardly satisfies my craving. When my friend Mr. Pherozshaw Mehta's great speech comes to an end I feel an aching void ; a certain cerebral action ceases in pain. "Why doesn't he go on ?" I ask ; and Professor Peterson—"Why doesn't *he* go on ?" If they both went on for ever they would come to the point, and meet ; for a child can see that they are not the asymptotes of a hyperbola.

***

SOME people say that a certain Executive Engineer, of whom we know nothing, connived at the breach of a certain contract, with which we have no concern, and some people say that

he did not. On the point of this needle the angels dance. Round this centre three columns of human interest vibrate for the whole of Western India!

***

To descend from the sublime to the ridiculous Lord Lytton has been made an Earl! "Such is the stuff they make Earls of!" This is what the profane say, mocking. I am sure I do not grudge the Viceroy the dignity. I would not raise a finger to prevent his getting it. I do not desire to stand in the way of sinners.

***

THERE are many worse Earls than Earl Lytton. There is the Earl of Beaconsfield, not to go farther.

***

MAKING Lord Lytton an Earl stamps with the royal approval a long concatenation of follies and absurdities, beginning with the Delhi Assemblage and ending with Lepel Griffin's embassy to Kabul. That is why I am rather disposed to snort at the Earldom.

***

YOU know that I am an enthusiastic admirer of Dr. W. G. Hunter, and I am sure you will not

mind my saying that the commemoration and monumental business is a little overdone in Bombay. Dr. Hunter has been eminently successful in his profession and in society; and the memory of this is a lasting monument. His name will smell sweet and blossom in the dust of Bombay for at least two generations; and no one can expect more than this.

* * *

My dear Editor, forgive me for saying so, but Bombay has at the present moment a tendency to crystallise into a mutual admiration society, and a number of good-natured, idle, busybodies are too much disposed to invest their unemployed capital in tombstones and epitaphs to the music of subscription lists and newspaper paragraphs.

* * *

When society becomes too self-conscious, it is always holding high orgies over its members, to ostracise, or canonise them.

* * *

I like the Irish Relief Fund better. In this generous work Bombay sets the whole world an example of disinterested and muni-

ficent philanthropy, (singing Rule Britannia, &c.)

* * *

At present the Transport Department is hard at work conveying captured guns from Kabul to Peshawar. Thirty-four left Kabul on the 15th; sixty were to leave on the 16th. A great number of these are guns we presented Shere Ali in the simpering, goody-goody days of Lords Lawrence and Mayo. They will certainly go back again to Kabul duly repaired and re-mounted, when the peace re-action sets in, and the Government of India resorts to meretricious caresses to preserve tranquillity on the Frontier.

* * *

Lord Beaconsfield might now turn the tables on the electors of East Worcestershire, by sending Sir Richard Temple out here as Viceroy before Parliament assembles. Heavens, what galloping we should have!

* * *

Sir Ashley Eden, Sir George Couper, the Duke of Buckingham, and Boss Lytton (as General Grant would insist upon addressing

him) are by this time safely seated on their Acroceraunian heights, wrapped in their Thunder-clouds, the *infames scopulos Acroceraunia* of Darjiling, Naini Tal, Ooty, and Simla. Many Arethusas arise from their couches of snow to greet them. They will not yet awhile rush down the crags, seaward, with their rainbow locks and chamaeleon reputations streaming among the streams: this will come later on. In the meantime all is superciliously calm; no breath of scandal arches the eyebrow, or ripens a blush; the Governments are passionless.

"On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind
For they lie beside their boxes and Gazettes are hurled
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world."

They will continue to be careless of *man*kind; but presently some Arethusa will start up screaming and clamouring for her lost character and her fading blushes,—a vision of sin and the sleeping Palace awakes; at a touch, a kiss, the charm is snapt, and the cock crows. Night with its illusions is over; harsh morning breaks on the cold hills; Venus laughs demoniacally,

and fierce Cupid stands glowing at hand, whetting his burning arrows on a grindstone red with men's heartblood.

* * *

THIS kind of thing is called a hill scandal. Sometimes too there are scandals on the plains. But one cannot be *very* scandalous under a punkah.

* * *

"PONE sub curru nimium propinqui
Solis, in terra domibus negata:
Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,
Dulce loquentem :—but I should only trifle with her hand.

* * *

SUCH a good story comes to me from the Duke of Buckingham !—I feel half inclined to tell it; but I suppose I mustn't? I suppose one must draw the line somewhere? If Pinhey has not sailed, ask him to tell it to you. He tells it capitally.

No. IX.

(*May* 4, 1880.)

If Lord Ripon can speak the truth and keep accounts I joyfully acquiesce in his appointment. To my mind his change of faith argues conduct regulated by principle; and a little of this kind of thing will do the Government of India no harm. Some plain speaking and correct figuring will steady us after the delirium out of which we are perhaps awaking.

* * *

I sympathise with the delight evinced by our friends in Madras on learning that a Duke was not to be made Viceroy. Anything is better than a Duke, the Madrasees say; even a young person of culture and fancy.

* * *

With Lord Lytton Sir John Strachey will

certainly go. The reign of the former and the counsel of the latter are the complements of each other. But there is no reason why Mr. Lyall should not continue to be Foreign Secretary. He has always understood the meaning of his official designation. He has never fancied himself a Minister, as Mr. Aitchison foolishly did; and he will accordingly prove an equally useful Secretary during a blood-and-thunder policy as during a peace-and-honor-be-blowed policy. It is the duty of a Secretary to record, register and draft; not to hold and enforce opinions.

* * *

WILL Mr. Chapman succeed Sir John Strachey? Has certain correspondence regarding the Orissa Famine been forgotten at the India Office?—But perhaps Mr. Chapman will haughtily sniff the air, as tainted by a papist Lord.

* * *

FORTUNATELY for Lord Ripon there are very few besides Mr. Chapman connected with the Government of India who have any of these fine drawn scruples about churches and sects.

The religious tendency at Simla is towards an undemonstrative form of Buddhism, the Council being regarded as Nirvana with no horizon beyond.

***

LORD RIPON will be the first catholic Governor-General of India. Since the Reformation no Catholic has ever held so great an office under the English Crown.

***

FIFTEEN years ago Lady De Grey's beautiful face was familiar to every one. It smiled upon you from the windows of every print-shop : it was the picture-face of the day. Notwithstanding the slight prominence of the front teeth, it was a face worthy of romance and art; a face illuminated with an exquisite sweetness. The Marquis looks heavy and serious. There are worse looks than these.

***

I TRUST that Anglo-India will give a generous welcome to the Marquis of Ripon; and that convictions which do him all honor will not evoke an outcry of mawkish bigotry. In these evil days it is comfortable to meet with some

one who believes something. One can believe in a man who believes something.

***

A BELIEF is the converse of "long disquiet merged in death."

***

WHEN Mr. Gladstone telegraphed to me to say that Mr. Goschen was coming, I could only reply—"This is not the Land of Goshen."—You know the result.

***

YOU ask me if it is true that I recommended the Maharaja of Cashmir for the Viceroyalty. I did not. I only suggested that he should replace Mr. Caird in the Famine Commission.

***

SOME day, no doubt, a great Maharaja will sit on the Viceregal throne. His Highness has not been begotten, or born yet; but when these preliminaries are over, I believe that he will be an honor to his race and to our rule; and I wish that I were fifty years younger to see his day—a day when the war-drum will all throb no longer, when our battle flags will all

be furled, when race prejudices will have faded like night-mares, and when the Town Council of Bombay will be lapt in universal psalm-singing.

***

It is all very well for Mr. Kipling to say that he was not architect of the new public buildings facing the Back Bay; but who, I should like to know, was guilty of the atrocious circus tent of 1877 that is now torturing the artistic soul of Val. Prinsep? Who flung the paint pots about and committed excesses in bunting? Who made heraldry ridiculous, while engaged to make it artistic?

***

But that dreadful business of 1877 was at best, a hopeless task; and I, for one, who have heard something of Mr. Kipling's work, have a sincere respect for it. No one can, I believe, with less justice be accused of anglicising Indian art, and no one strives more earnestly to be faithful to nature as he sees it round his work than Mr. Kipling. He possesses, moreover, the rare advantage of being able to reflect his impressions of

nature in words as well as in lines and colours, wielding a pen like a master.

***

Sir Donald Stewart's victory near Ghazni seems to be altogether satisfactory, as far as we can judge before receiving a full and veracious non-official report: not so the second battle of Charasiab. Here we find the old sins more glaring than ever. Intelligence of what is going on around Sherpur in the camp of the enemy seems to be grossly defective; armies of which nothing is known appear almost at the walls without warning! The outpost at Charasiab seems, moreover, to have been absurdly inadequate to the duty of holding a position of such vital importance. There is, perhaps, verisimilitude in the accounts we have so far received: but I should not be surprised to learn later on that the engagement partook for us more of defeat than victory. It is to be hoped that General Macpherson's despatches will not now be suppressed as they were after his column nearly perished of hunger and thirst (before Ali Musjid) when sent on a wild goose chase by Sir Sam Browne into a

country where there were neither roads nor provisions.

***

THIS second battle of Charasiab proves clearly how far away we are from any satisfactory settlement in Afghanistan, how exceedingly precarious our position is at Sherpur, and how little moral effect our military operations have so far produced on the Afghans. This force that unexpectedly appeared on the hill-sides was on the point of surprising General Roberts in his cantonment; and it has only disappeared to reappear, perhaps still more unexpectedly and with different fortunes.

***

A BATTLE with the Afghans is merely a waste of life and powder, unless we can inflict upon them a crushing defeat.

No. X.

(*May* 15, 1880.)

THOUGH of course erroneously, it is, and always will be, generally believed throughout India that the Imperial accounts were manipulated with a regard to the election death-struggle. In every part of India there are people who believe that the present Government of India is a very unscrupulous one; who try to find the number of the beast in some anagram formed out of the word Strachey; who look upon Earl Lytton as a dilettante Viceroy playing with empire; and who fear that in long association with baseness even the righteous and the innocent, even Chapmans and Johnsons, may have touched the unclean thing. It is needless to traverse such prejudices with argument. When men fall to carping with the

Powers that Be, the only cure for them is promotion.

* * *

THE most violent enemies of Lord Lytton's rule may be conciliated by seats on some mock committee in the Hills,—"Rest in a happy place and quiet seats above the thunder."

* * *

As an ardent admirer of all persons whose function it is to contribute to Gazettes and compose despatches, I view with surprise and sorrow the three minutes of the Council, the Military Member, and the Military Accountant-General respectively. The India Office has never had whispered in its ear confessions more unsatisfactory, and apologies more incoherent. Parliament will not be able to assoil these fat penitents, whatever they may whimper about the wild profusion of Sir Michael Kennedy and the Tailtwisting Department.

* * *

MAJOR NEWMARCH is Sir Henry Norman's brother-in-law. This will do him no harm.

* * *

BUT sending out a Commission to enquire

into the financial misfeasance is the wildest folly conceivable ; even under Richard as Cicerone. With the water-logged Famine Commission sinking before their eyes to the bubbling cries of General Strachey and Mr. Elliott, it is amazing that they should have launched another such ship to hunt another such snark,—or, perhaps, a boojum this time.

* * *

I HOPE that in these days of political darkness we do not forget to thank Mr. Gladstone for withholding from us for a season that "arch prig"—as the Private Secretary calls him—Mr. Grant Duff. It was very hard to bear the Duke of Argyll ; but this Grant-Duff thing was really too intolerable. I hear he has applied for the appointment of Deputy Providence in connection with the Scotch Church.

* * *

MR. DALRYMPLE who was unseated for Bute, is a brother of our new Governor, I am told. He changed his name on succeeding to his estate. To have been unseated at this last election is an honor not to be sneezed at. To

be separated by a discriminating populace from the Mr. Bradlaughs, Mr. Broadhursts and Mr. Mundellas who form our new Repsesentative Chamber is equivalent to a vote of confidence passed by all that is still respectable in the electoral body.

* * *

THERE has been a good deal of nonsense talked and written about the offer of the Viceroyalty made to Mr. Goschen. A good many people seem to think that Mr. Goschen was too small and round a man for such a large square hole. Nothing could be more absurd than this. Mr. Goschen was really too great for the appointment. No one who has attained the rank of a Cabinet Minister in England would, as a general rule, care to take the office. There has never yet been a Viceroy of the rank of a Cabinet Minister, except Lord Canning. And, as regards family, there is little to choose between Mr. Goschen and Lord Northbrook, or Mr. Goschen and Lord Lawrence. Mr. Goschen may have Hebrew blood in his veins, but Rugby and Oxford and a long and honourable career in that great

school, the House of Commons, have made him thoroughly English.

***

THE Marquis of Ripon was a Cabinet Minister; but his religious attitude makes his case an exceptional one. He will be the greatest Peer in point of rank who has ever filled the office of Viceroy. No Knight of the Garter has ever before served the Crown in India.

***

UP to a certain point Lord Ripon was an exceedingly successful man in life. When created a Marquis for the performance of a service of which England is not very proud, one hundred and sixty-eight Earls took precedence of him in virtue of priority of creation.

***

EXCITABLE people who call for blood, must remember that Indian Viceroys are not usually chosen from the first, second, or even third rank of English nobles. Lord Canning was the son of a Commoner; Lord Elgin, though a Bruce and a Scotch Earl, only sat as a Baron in the House of Lords; of Lord Lawrence we need say nothing; Lord Mayo had no seat at all in

the House of Lords, being neither a Representative Peer, nor a Peer of the United Kingdom, nor a Peer of Great Britain; Lord Northbrook's father was the first Peer of the family; and Lord Lytton, who came to India as a Baron,—a Peer of the fifth rank,—is also the son of an ennobled Commoner.

* * *

Lord Ripon married his cousin, who, though the daughter of a Commoner and plain Miss Vyner, was nevertheless beautiful, and through her mother was granddaughter of the first Earl de Grey. In spite of all his greatness it is sad to reflect that the Most Noble the Marquis of Ripon, K.G., is only a Robinson under his ermine; just as we poor Commoners are mere skeletons under our warm flesh.

* * *

Protestants curl their lips when they remember that Lord Ripon's motto is "*qualis ab incepto.*"

* * *

Sir James Fergusson assures me that he declined a commisson in the Bombay Volunteers, not because he was afraid of being drafted off to Kandahar, but because he did

not think it worth his while being a Volunteer while the mail went out on Saturday evening.

* * *

THE criminality of the late Government in the matter of the loss of the Atlanta has never been sufficiently noticed. This ship, with upwards of three-hundred young sailors on board, has not been heard of since January; and not till March was any search instituted! It is sufficiently infamous for the Admiralty to employ experimental ships for training purposes without neglecting to enquire after them when missing.

* * *

As First Lord of the Admiralty the Earl of Northbrook will have a more tender heart than his predecessor in all matters relating to experimental ships. He lost a son in the Captain.

* * *

THE appointment of Major White, of the 92nd Highlanders, to be Military Secretary to the new Viceroy, is quite unexceptionable. Beyond being a most gallant soldier, White is a

man of brains and books; with good looks, good manners, and a good estate in Ireland. Every one knows him and likes him; and being his son-in-law, he is pleasantly associated in every one's mind with that celebrated churchman, Archdeacon Baly.

* * *

It was also highly commendable retaining Lord William Beresford and Mr. Muir on the staff. It would have been doing the noble house of Waterford a cruel injustice to allow Lord William Beresford to go before seeing the new Viceregal stables at Dehra finished. "Charlie" Muir is a son of Sir William Muir, and a good man all round, from polo to skittles. He came out here in the 6th Foot and passing into the Staff Corps served for a time in the Bengal Cavalry, and was then translated into the bodyguard. He officiated for some time as extra A. D. C. to Lord Northbrook, and is now passing to his third Governor-General.

* * *

I HEAR that our new Finance Minister will come out from home, after passing an examination in addition and subtraction. I should

not be surprised if they sent us Sir George Kellner. It certainly will be great thing to have some one on the staff of this young and extravagant Empire who can keep accounts.

* * *

Of course the first thing that Lord Ripon will do on arriving in India, after washing his hands and drinking a peg, will be to suppress the Press Commissioner. The services of Mr. Lethbridge will then be replaced at the disposal of the Education Department. He is going to spend the remainder of his days, I am told, in writing a history of the next world, as a sequel to his history of this world.

* * *

Our friend Mr. Buckland will also be thrown on the world: but he proposes creating a Floricultural Department in connection with the Government of India, and becoming its Secretary. Its full title will be the Button-hole and Floricultural Department,—I hear that you have a great Button-holer in the High Court, who will probably be made an Under-Secretary in the new Bureau.

No. XI.

(*May* 20, 1880.)

Do you think it would be impracticable to preserve Sir Frederick Haines in spirits? It seems hard that the critic of the Army Commission Report should ever be lost to the world —the Darling of the Horse Guards who is "firmly of opinion that the lines laid down for us by our forefathers are the safest, and that on these we should be content to move."

***

We now know why H. E. never went to Kandahar:—because the Temple State Railway was not a line laid down by H. E.'s forefathers.

***

Poor Admiral Bythesea, the entire seafaring population of Simla, is no longer to be

allowed to stultify his name by living on the hills. He will be a loss to Simla. So rare and picturesque a thing as a Himalayan Admiral will probably never be seen again. The Indian navy will now be handed over to Archdeacon Baly. He will hoist his flag on a canoe-dandy at Simla.

***

I HEAR that the most influential coterie at Simla, hitherto unattached to any religion or scheme of morality, are making preparations to go over to what Protestants call "the Church of Rome." The *Tablet* and the *Indo-European Correspondence* are finding their way on to tables hitherto sacred to the unbelieving *Pioneer* and the works of Theophile Gautier, or Emile Zola. Similarly freemasons are to be seen sitting up at night with wet towels bound round their temples and strong tea at hand, trying to forget what the Pope calls their "hocus-pocus." The number of aprons and triangles already secreted under beds and behind pictures of the Saints all over India is quite amazing.

***

IT amuses me considerably to think how

much the importance of Anglican Bishops will be discredited three weeks hence. Some people, for instance, will pretend not to know whether Bishop Meurin or Bishop Benedict is Bishop of Bombay.

***

But there is no Bishop for whom my heart so profusely bleeds as for the learned, excellent and popular Scotch Bishop of the Union Cathedral at Simla. To Monseigneur Fordyce a Popish Viceroy will be as a moral pestilence. The sun will never shine again so brightly on the globe, the winds will never blow again so sweetly round the episcopal manse until the unclean thing is removed.

***

The *Hindu Patriot* makes a curious mistake in announcing that the change of Ministry has saved Cashmere from annexation. It is notorious that Lord Lytton's Government have lent a deaf ear to the reports received of abuses in the Happy Valley, which are now, under the Liberals, about to be investigated and for which the Maharaja is to be called to account. Under neither Whig nor Tory has there ever been, or will there ever be, any talk of annex-

ing Native States. This, though physically easy, is morally impossible.

* * *

"THERE are many things to which a Political Officer must be blind" has recently been the tenor, and on one occasion the text of Lord Lytton's instructions to our Representative in Cashmere.

* * *

AND in avoiding a scandal at this time Lord Lytton was certainly acting a prudent part. There is a limit to human effort, and when famine and war were raging it was impossible for the Government of India to deal vigorously with what, on enquiry, might prove to be a vast system of misrule.

* * *

I READ in a Madras paper the other day that under Lord Hartington the India Council would "have it more their own way than ever." There is surely some strange misconception here. All the world knows that under Lord Salisbury and Lord Cranbrook the authority of the India Council was entirely effaced. These Ministers came down to the office big

with schemes conceived in Cabinet Councils, and all the greybeards and K.C.S.I.s in the world could not move them a hair's breadth from the course they had laid down. Under the Marquis of Hartington the Council may perhaps have some voice in Indian matters; because the Marquis is indolent, and has other fish to fry besides politics.

***

PERHAPS there is no one who will anathematise the late Government more fiercely than Sir John Strachey. He became the slave of its slave; and this slavery has ended in the ruin of his reputation. He now goes home dishonoured, an old man, broken in health, broken in spirits, and embittered with disappointment and obloquy. His name will be associated for ever with a Viceroyalty of which hard things have been said and harder things will be said, till it slides into history and is forgotten.

***

SIR JOHN STRACHEY is one of the ablest men who ever came to India, and through thirty years of ill-health he has laboured indefatigably

for the good of her people. If he had retired on the death of Lord Mayo, or if he had retained the Lieutenant-Governorship of the North-Western Provinces during Lord Lytton's stay in this country, he would have been able to take a seat in the India Council on his return to England with a great and undoubted reputation. Until he became Lord Lytton's Finance Minister he was universally liked and respected. He used to be called "the Dyspeptic Crow."

***

I HEAR that Mr. Triptolemus Yellowby's report is at last approaching completion. While the Afghan war continues to cost a crore a month, Government cannot afford to spend a thousand pounds a week on Mr. Yellowby's quill-driving.

***

MR. ELLIOTT will soon be out again to assume charge of the census operations. The people will be counted in February and the counting will cost a quarter of a million,—two hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling! We could fight a battle against the Afghans for less than

this, if Sir Michael Kennedy were out of the way.

***

I HEAR from home that Lord Beaconsfield has written a letter to the Marquis of Salisbury in which he commiserates the fate of Lord Lytton having to leave India before his policy has reached maturity. The letter ends with the following quotation :—

"A bud bit by an envious worm
Ere he could spread his sweet leaves to the air,
Or dedicate his beauty to the sun."

***

"BEFORE his policy has reached maturity!" It is already matured to the ripe round figures of £10,000,000. This will do for us. We are not greedy.

***

IT is said that the Maharaja of Bulrampur, the greatest of the Barons of Oudh, and the Nawab of Rampūr, Rohilkhand, are each going to subscribe one lakh of rupees towards the relief of the sick and wounded in Afghanistan. The Maharaja of Jaipur and the Maharajas Sindia and Holkar are also said to

be exceedingly desirous of bearing some share proportionate to their vast wealth, of the military burthens now devolving on the Empire. While all readily acknowledge the loyalty and liberality of these great Princes, many are inclined to suspect political wire-pulling when Benevolences are talked of.

***

Good management is said to have rewarded the Maharaja Holkar with vast accumulations of treasure. Everything that is bought, or sold, or carried through Indore yields His Highness some contribution to the revenue of the State. *Lucri bonus est odor ex re quâlibet.*

***

But in my experience of Indian character I have not found that a spontaneous impulse often arises to cart away sacks of coin,—even for imperial purposes.

No. XII.

(*May* 22, 1880.)

After his defeat in East Worcestershire Sir Richard Temple went over to the camp of the enemy and visited Lord Northbrook. He beat the post by five minutes; but Lord Northbrook took care to impress upon him that as he was no longer Governor of Bombay, or a candidate for Parliament, it was unnecessary for him to impair his health by wild and precipitate travelling.

***

The Button-Hole and Floricultural scheme has fallen through, and as the Foreign Secretaryship is not vacant, Mr. C. E. Buckland has accepted the Commissionership of Stamps and Stationery.

***

He has so thoroughly organised the office of Press Commissioner that it is now perfectly automatic, and can be left to work alone. Poor

Roper Lethbridge is like Satan in a Hill Station; his occupation is gone.

* * *

Lord Lytton has asked me to suggest in a brief minute the qualifications likely to prove most useful to a Finance Commissioner in the proposed audit of the public accounts. I have modestly hinted that blue eyes, fair hair, a love of manly sports, a capacity for spending about three thousand a month, and a cheerful readiness to go on leave to the Hills or to England should go far to make the kind of official required.

* * *

But Lord Lytton often asks for suggestions when he has no intention of acting upon them, and I can see that he is still bent on bringing out a Market Gardener and a Glasgow Bank Director to sit on the Commission. "The great advantage of this arrangement," he says, "is that when they have exhausted the subject of finance they will be able to place on record, in a Parliamentary Blue Book, some practical remarks on the general administration of India and the re-organization of the native army."

* * *

Sir John Strachey is this year one of the

honored few who are annually selected, without the ordeal of ballot, by the committee, for admission to the Athenæum Club. Political or literary eminence is the ordinary test. Sir John has been presumably selected for the plausibility of his Budget statement which made the thunder clouds of a deficit roseate with the sunshine of fiction and imagination.

***

I SEE they are beginning to execute the Rumpa rebels. This threatens to spoil the insurrection. Even the Duke of Buckingham cannot have his cake and eat it. If he executes the rebels, very soon there will be no rebellion ; and Madras will fall back into its normal obscurity.

***

I AM told that orders have come out from home limiting the Afghan campaign to this season. The troops will be withdrawn in October, whether we have established our hegemony or not. In the meantime—"Wanted, an Amir for Kabul; no Russians need apply." If Abdul Rahman would only come in, the difficulty would be perhaps removed.

***

THERE will be no more talk about Herat

now, unless Mr. Gladstone wishes to hand it over to Russia, which is exceedingly probable.

***

May I ask, what have your correspondents "Midlothian" and "Bannockburn,"—if their *noms de plume* indicate the part of Scotland they come from—to do with Mr. Grant Duff and Mr. Maclean? Messrs. Grant Duff and Maclean are Celtic Highlanders and have no more connection with the Saxon population of the lowlands than if they were Hindoos. This loose talk about "Scots" ignores the fact that two distinct races utterly hostile in character, inhabit respectively the low country between the Cheviots and the Grampians and the high country between the Grampians and the North Sea. A great deal of the confusion of thought existing on this subject is due to that romantic lowlander Sir Walter Scott, who loved to dress his own countrymen in the picturesque garb and habits of the northern "barbarians," and who himself, on more than one occasion, masqueraded in a kilt.

No. XIII.

(*May* 28, 1880.)

LETTER received by the last mail say that Lord Ripon is resolved to make a clean sweep of those amusing people at Simla who have impressed their character so deeply on the present administration. These letters have created surprise and dismay. The amusing people are said to be seen at dead of night, cloaked and masked, with office boxes and spades. It is not the surplus they are burying;—only files of demi-official correspondence. But this cannot be true, can it?

***

DURING the day our amusing people, I am told, meet together over tea and hymn-books to recover those first principles of natural and

revealed religion which they once took such pains to unlearn. Precepts sedulously forgotten during three years are now being conned with beating hearts and bloodshot eyes.

***

I HEAR that there is going to be a great explosion in a London paper on some Indian subjects. The match has been lighted by one who knows the secret history of many queer and shadowy transactions. Reputations will be shattered beyond the healing art of the Director General of Statistics.

***

MY special correspondent in Kabul writes to say that Mr. Lepel Griffin will succeed Sir Henry Daly at Indore as Agent to the Governor-General. Mark this, Mr. Editor, for there are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

***

BUT Mr. Lepel Griffin must first install Abdul Rahman among the ruins of the Bala Hissar as Agent to the Governor-General for Kabul. Yet they say that Abdul Rahman is the stuff that dreams are made of, and by no

means easily realised, or converted into a current Sovereign.

***

Mr. Lepel Griffin is, I hear, tottering on the verge of knighthood and other great precipices : so a tendency to say the pleasantest things about him keeps bubbling up in your orphan's manly and independent bosom.

***

Surely the papers have been hoaxed by that poem which has recently appeared in Mr. Tennyson's name on the human fœtus. More monstrous filth and gibberish have never been pumped out of the depths of vanity and brandy.

***

To Major White, Mr. Webster, Lord William Beresford and others who have been made to leave the hills and pass through the fire to meet him, the Marquis of Ripon must seem a veritable Moloch. No new Viceroy ever before received such human sacrifices. Collectors at every refreshment room with guards of honor, escorts of cavalry riding behind the train, and all this in June and uniform !

***

The arrangements described in the *Pioneer*

for the reception of the Marquis by the North-Western Provinces, are rather calculated to create giddiness and what Sanscrit scholars call the "chukkars." The North-West, it appears, has resolved to play its Websters,—Websters being trumps in the North-West. "The principal Civil Officer deputed by the Government of the North-West to accompany Lord Ripon in his journey through these Provinces, is Mr. H. Webster, C.S., Inspector-General of Police. W. Webster," (who does not appear to be entitled to the prefix Mr.) who "is now at Naini Tal, will proceed to Jubbulpore to receive Lord Ripon"—Dan'l Webster,—commonly known as "the jumping frog,"—will receive Lord Ripon on the Allahabad Railway station platform, and will present him with an American pronouncing Dictionary, or a Bible, as the case may be.

* * *

It is not impossible that Mr. Grant Duff may succeed the Duke of Buckingham as Governor of Madras. The appointment was offered to him years ago; but he refused it. He is now, however, an embittered and disappointed man, and will probably take any-

thing rather than remain the odd-man-out of his party. Considering the note-books he has gorged in foreign travel, and considering the acres of magazine paper that have run to waste under his pen, it doubtless seems one of the inscrutable ways of Providence to his Elgin admirers that he should be left to drudge as an Under-Secretary in the Colonial Office, instead of being entrusted with a portfolio and a seat in the Cabinet.

* * *

But he is now precisely in the position of a man to whom the Governorship of Madras is likely to be offered. Liberals and Conservatives would be equally glad to have a thick section of the globe between him and the House of Commons; and the only thing that stands in his way is probably the unwillingness of the Duke's friends to have His Grace back again in England.

* * *

It is believed that Sir George Campbell was once solemnly warned by a Deputation from both parties that if he continued his career of insufferable boredom in the House he would be transported to Government House, Madras.

But Mr. Grant Duff is not a man to take a hint.

* * *

I HEAR from Simla that Sir John Strachey contemplates an immediate flight from India. Simla has lost its charms for him. He misses the surplus.

* * *

SIR FREDERICK ROBERTS feels the same impulse as Sir John Strachey and the swallows to migrate westward. He longs to meet the Marquis of Salisbury who created him "Our Great Hero;" and he is tired of heliographing victories and popping in and out of Sherpur like a mouse foraging from its hole.

* * *

SIR FREDERICK is sorry that he did not get wounded and go home after the retrived blundering of the Peiwar Kotal. Here our troops were not actually beaten, and if he had reached England when people were murmuring "bachgaya" he would have been created a G.C.B., a Baronet, and a Fellow of the United Service Co-operative Stores.

* * *

LIKE Macpherson and Massy, Donald

Stewart has added lustre to his reputation as a General, yet he has not had his despatches suppressed, or been recalled. How is this?

* * *

Is the statement (recently made in the *Times*) that Sir Frederick Haines will be created Lord Simla of Ali Masjid and Sherpur true? I suppose it is a mere guess, on a par with the surmise that the Earl of Lytton's armorial supporters will no longer be wingless angels, but Sir John Strachey and Sir Edmond Johnson.

* * *

Lord Cranbrook, in speaking the other day at a public dinner in London, said that Lord Lytton had discharged his duties in India "with an ability almost unrivalled." Such blatant nonsense must be particularly annoying to Lord Lytton who is far too clever a man not to see that, notwithstanding the magnitude of his schemes, the soft persuasiveness of his despatches, and the gentle charm of his oratory, his rule must be placed in the category of splendid failures, owing, not to a want of fidelity to the Conservative party or to a lack of imagination and rhetorical talent; but owing to a want

of ability to grasp great transactions and see their drift and consequence.

***

In the same speech Lord Cranbrook goes on to say (in his peculiarly halting style) :—"You will find, too, some chaplains exhibiting a degree of heroism and exposing their lives to rescue others in a way which raises them to the level of any of those men who, as the reward of their courage, have received the Victoria Cross." I defy any one to express this opinion with more awkwardness and impotence: yet the opinion is worthy of being placed on record, and should be coupled, as we say in proposing toasts, with the name of Padre Adams.

***

The Delhi Assemblage and the Afghan War had for their motive a desire to prove to Russia the grandeur of our rule in Asia and the extent of our supremacy. The former covered every one concerned with it with ridicule ; and the latter has been exceptionally disastrous to the reputation of our Generals and to our finances. One need not be a Russian to see this.

No. XIV.

(*June* 12, 1880.)

As I write the Marquis of Ripon is being sworn in; and the clergy are present to see that there is no more swearing done than is absolutely necessary. My Lord Marquis doesn't swear very hard: but then his aye *is* aye; and his nay *is* nay. This I expect will make some of the bureaucrats rather giddy.

* * *

I ENVY Lord Lytton as he goes whistling out of the Council Chamber with his hands in his pockets. The care of two hundred and fifty millions of immortal souls (exclusive of the handful of perishable atheists at Simla) the conduct of a bleeding war and the mismanage-

ment of some fifty or sixty crores of rupees a year are lifted off his shoulders at one swoop! And the *Pioneer* says he is a genius!

* * *

CERTAINLY he has earned the title more cheaply than any one I can think of in ancient or modern times. His verses are only respectable: they have never even been popular: they have never touched any chord in the heart of the great British public: it is very questionable indeed whether they have ever paid for the paper on which they are printed. They are generally condemned as "clever," of course no *poetry* can be "clever." Little after dinner speeches charged with the harmless sheet-lightning of epigram, anecdote, and quotation are all that remain beyond conversation which is agreeable and amusing without being remarkable. In his public business we have been assured by the *claque* in London that Lord Lytton is industrious: it is therefore only left for us to regret that he has been so eminently unsuccessful.

* * *

BUT now it is all over. The Empire changes

hands. The thing is done in a moment, like heart-disease.

***

IT is quite absurd to attribute the following odious parody which is going about to Sir John Strachey :—

"He moved in somewhat tortuous ways
The summer heats above,
A lord whom there were few to praise
And fewer still to love.
He lived unblessed and few could know
When Lytton ceased to be,
But he is gone to rest : and oh !
The difference to me !"

***

THE difference is a very considerable one to me and to everybody in India. Lord Lytton's career shows us very plainly how much one in his position can do and undo in less than the prescribed span of office. It will take several Viceroyalties for India to get over Lord Lytton.

***

A BLUNT, God-fearing man, with rather a fumbling style in letter-writing would not have made a successful Private Secretary to the

Governor-General. His principles would not have permitted him to associate with any one at Simla except, perhaps, Mr. Chapman; and he would never have learnt to write gracefully little confidential notes on subjects of which he was totally ignorant in such a way as to conceal his meaning and commit neither himself nor his master to any line of action or expression of opinion.

***

Colonel Owen Burn was an awkward man with a pen; but his language was never so threadbare as to expose his thoughts. He was not such a simpleton as to let his correspondents know what he intended to say in his letters. Moreover, though a man with principles of his own, he would hobnob conversationally with any one, and rather liked to be fished, yet the most charming little fisherwoman that ever angled with smiles and blushes never caught the tiniest minnow of information in those pellucid waters.

***

Colonel Gordon's intention on first landing at Bombay was to go with the Marquis of

Ripon to Simla and there unsheathing the sword of the Lord and of Gideon to smite the host of Midian and the unbelieving children of the East hip and thigh even unto the going down of the sun. There would not have been left of all those grasshoppers to nobble the Press, or to suppress a despatch, or to hatch a surplus in a mare's nest either, member of Council, or Secretary, or Under-Secretary or any of such as putteth pen to paper in all the land of Simla.

***

COLONEL GORDON would then have proceeded to Missourie with fresh copies of the Treaty of Gandamak in his pocket, and he would have taken Absalom by the hand and restored him to the throne of his father David.

***

A RIGHTEOUS man and a hero of whom all Englishmen are proud, Colonel Gordon was not intended by nature for the soft and gentle winds of a bureaucratic Government; but give to him the snaring breeze and white waves heaving high,—and we should find him a square man in a square hole. As the poet says of a

very different person whose name is suggested by thoughts of Absalom :—

A daring pilot in extremity ;
Pleased with the danger when the waves went high.
He sought the storms ; but, for a calm unfit."

* * *

When Mr. Aitchison goes up to Simla, Lord Ripon will have found a Lieutenant after his own heart,—a strong, capable, straightforward, and candid man, none of your jugglers.

* * *

People are everywhere asking impatiently when Sir Frederick Haines, Sir John Strachey, Sir Edmond Johnson, Major Newmarch, and Mr. Chapman are going. All of these people have been solemnly condemned by the unanimous voice of public opinion, yet they retain their appointments.

* * *

People should not ask impatient questions. People forget how difficult it is to obtain such good appointments elsewhere. These five officials receive between them upwards of thirty-two thousand pounds a year ; yet the present Ministry and almost every English and Indian

newspaper have declared each of them to be something more than unfit for the appointment he holds.

* * *

FAR be it from me to agree with the newspapers, or with the public, or with any one individually about anything! But I must say that in my humble understanding Lord Lytton's conduct in this matter appears more dignified than that of his Ministers. On finding that his stewardship was disapproved of and that those who disapproved of it most strongly were placed in authority over him, he resigned.

* * *

I HEAR that the interesting collection of Anglican Archdeacons at Simla is going to be dispersed. The Marquis says that one Archdeacon at Head-quarters is enough for him; and that there are many more important things to be attended to before the question of establishing a system of Etons and Harrows in the hills for Eurasians can be seriously taken up.

* * *

IT is curious to watch the course of insults offered by the Burmese to the British Government and to speculate how far it will be suf-

fered to go. The Lion is sometimes very hard to rouse, especially when his attitude is one of repose. The Burmese are in despair. They are wanting in originality, and at present they cannot think of any new affront to offer. They want a war and they have employed the usual means to bring this about. They have trodden on our coat-tails, slapped us in the face, and called us names. Now, I believe the point is seriously discussed in Mandalay whether if they seized the Chief Commissioner, shaved his head, and sent him back to Rangoon riding on a donkey with his face Mandalay-wards, their purpose would be effected.

* * *

The army of Mandalay consists of several disorderly mobs of epicene scarecrows armed with foul language and cheroots. But they are capable of receiving a flogging. Anything short of a cherubim can be tied up to the triangles and whipped.

No. XV.

(*June* 19, 1880.)

Colonel Gordon was recommended to the Marquis of Ripon by Lord Northbrook; and it is not unreasonable to conjecture that Mr. Primrose has been recommended by Mr. Gladstone. It is well-known that the venerable Premier is at once the patron and the protégé of the Primrose family. To Lord Ripon a Primrose, howsoever prim, a Scottish Primrose is to him, and it is nothing more.

* * *

As Abdur Rahman will not come in to Mr. Lepel Griffin, perhaps Mr. Lepel Griffin will go to Abdur Rahman. Mazar-i-Sharif

is the new capital of Afghanistan, and it is there our Chief Political Officer should be.

* * *

It is quite inconceivable to me what motive Government can have in suppressing the Umballa lottery. It appears to be the grossest interference with a perfectly simple and innocent commercial enterprise. If Lord William Beresford chooses to pay Rs. 40,000 for a single ticket—as he is stated to have done—this is his own affair; but even supposing that an officious Government disapproves of so large a transaction, they can suppress Lord William Beresford and not the lottery. The lottery holds out annually to upwards of fifteen thousand people a prospect of early retirement and comparative affluence. I have always hoped to win it myself, and although I have never even drawn a horse, I am of so sanguine a disposition that I have been amply repaid in expectations for all the money I have invested. I think the framers of what has been designated by the home press "the Bogus Budget" need not have been so very strait-laced about this poor little sweep. This

is really straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel.

* * *

But while all the simple old sins mentioned in the Decalogue are assiduously cultivated with the general approbation of society, little derelictions of prudence, such as loo, cock-fighting, thimble-rigging, and marrying for love, are universally snorted at. If I abscond with a surplus, I shall be patted on the back and smiled at as a very "knowing card"; but if I elope with the girl I love, all my cousins and my sisters and my aunts will shy at me, as if I were a travelling menagerie.

* * *

Mr. Cunningham's defence of Sir John Strachey and Mr. Batten's defence of the budget are quite the hardest blows that Lord Lytton's Government have yet received. "If this is all that can be said by sworn brothers, the case must be indeed a bad one." This is what my Lord Marquis thinks. As for poor Cunningham, he doesn't know enough;—"Out of your depth, my child, out of your depth!"—as Tennyson sings. Batten, of course, knows too much and reminds one vividly of Sir Isaac

Newton picking up shells and wrinkles on the sea-shore. George weeps like anything to see such quantities of sand. "If this were only cleared away," he says, "it would be grand."

'If seven clerks with seven quills
'Figured for half a year,
'Do you suppose,' G. Aitch Bee says,
'That they could make it clear?'

***

THERE is going to be a great farce acted as Simla next month.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Infinite Ideality.....Mr. A. Hume.
Immeasurable Reality .....Mr. Thomas Hope.
Infinite Personality .....The Orphan.

***

THE doctors say that the Press Commissioner cannot live in the Tropics,—"and oh, dear friend, we would not have thee die:"—pray stay at home. But Simla is not in the Tropics, querulously replies the delicate Commissioner, quoting Mr. Blandford. And now that the *claque* is being dispersed, I have no doubt we shall see the historian of the world out again,

with the Indian Empire burning brightly on his bosom.

***

I HAVE just been reading with some amusement a letter describing the ovation accorded to the Marquis of Ripon on his arrival at Simla—the pony-carriage, the large family-umbrella, the local Volunteer force, the segregated secretaries unnoticed on the road, and Baron Bentinck in frockcoat and angola trousers! Alas, how faded is the Empire since 1877! Imperial Duessa, where are now thy trumpets, thy big Barnes, thy little Kipling, thy paint-pots, thy heralds, and thy gilded Maharajas! No longer is this "goodly lady clad in scarlet red purpled with gold and pearls of rich assay"—she is now reduced to the vice and squalor of a pony-carriage.

***

BUT we have got a Viceroy now who will be able to sit on a horse, instead of in a pony-carriage, I hope; and a contemporary of yours says he can hold a gun. These are symptoms of imperial convalescence.

***

I HEAR that Mr. Gibbs looks forlorn and

pine-like a deodar. Our sensitive plant is now "the earliest up gathered into the bosom of rest, and cradled within the embrace of Night," for there are no public dinners, or lodges at which he is asked to preside. What are pomphlets and oysters in ice to one bereaved of the Apollo Bunder! Even Sir Ashley Eden, the Apollo Belvidere, admits the force of this sentiment.

* * *

Nobody will take Kabul with everything found and board wages!—of course not. Nobody will take it while Mr. Griffin is there longing to teach the first candidate "God save the Queen." But as soon as Mr. Griffin and his army leave it, Abdur Rahman will take it to a different tune.

No. XVI.

(*June* 21, 1880.)

THE *Pall Mall Gazette* speaks of the Delhi Assemblage with merited contempt as "the apotheosis of Tinsel." No one attempts to defend it now. Mr. Prinsep's book and Mr. Prinsep's unfortunate panorama have added all that was wanting to render the pageant permanently ridiculous. The more one thinks of it the more ill-conceived and preposterous does the entire series of ceremonies appear. The darkened tent; the enthroned day-dreamer; the frightened politicals; the bewildered chiefs; the slip-shod heraldry; the tawdry banner; the set phrases of imperial admonition; the little book; our own sweet face in miniature on a nursery sword, pretty with velvet and glass;

the trumpery medals; the silly Persian titles and the final extravagances in the circus pavilion. These things cannot be spoken of now without scornful laughter.

***

When first projected the most ludicrous attempt was made to give the theatricals importance by an affectation of secrecy. Some days of ante-natal gloom elapsed before even the Foreign Secretary was told of the conception. Then all Bumbledom was winnowed to gather in the grain of reticence; and one dumb friend after another was solemnly initiated in darkness and whispers. Masks and red-hot pokers added a horror beyond the reach of nature. The initiation being conducted on masonic principles was gradual. Brother Thornton had only been instructed in Banners (18°), when the most Worshipful Uncle Bradford was already descending the hill, his face shining with a knowledge of medals (33°). Even at a period far beyond this a supercilious little Under-Secretary in the creditable pursuit of omniscience would sit smoking more than was good for him on the rail in front of the Foreign

Office, and ask every passer-by what the devil was going on at Peterhoff.

***

THE Chiefs were put to enormous expense and inconvenience in carrying to Delhi all their State paraphernalia; their corns were frightfully trodden upon by that clumsy clodhopper the F.O., and finally they were disappointed and amazed to find that, except for a few paltry presents, the *tamasha* was absolutely fruitless, marking no fresh departure in the development of the political control exercised by the Paramount Power over the native States. These are the only serious aspects of the atrocities perpetrated in the name of Empire at Delhi in 1877.

***

BUT when we reflect upon the enormous cost of this extravaganza, the interruption it caused to public business, the irritation it created in the native States, and the redicule it cast upon a Government that had hitherto always been sober and respectable, it is impossible to suppress feelings of shame, indignation, and anger.

***

THE yearning of the society journals after

scraps of information regarding people of whom they are absolutely ignorant and the way they are always tripping one another up by the heels are really too ludicrous. Here, for instance, is some ridiculous rag, calling itself the *Whitechapel Review*, that publishes a cartoon of a lady, described as the only daughter of General Grant, U. S. A., and the wife of "Mr. Sartorius, V. C., the hero of Coomassie." *Truth* at once comes rushing to the rescue and declares that the lady in question is married, not to Mr. Sartorius, V. C., but to an undecorated Mr. Sartoris (without a ewe in his name) and, moreover, that the Mr. Sartorius erroneously dragged into the legend cannot be correctly described as the hero of Coomassie, as he did not happen to be present at that battle. Then the lamp of *Truth* suddenly goes out and we are told many more things about this "Mr. Sartorius" who was married in 1878 at Simla. *Truth* should have written *Lieutenant Colonel* or *Colonel* Sartorius. This is surely a case of Sartor Resartus.

* * *

But conceive the audacity of a paper that

publishes a portrait of a lady while quite at sea as to her identity and name !

* * *

But this is the age of portrait-painting. A friend of mine, an Associate of the Royal Academy of Interviewing, earns something less than fame and more than notoriety by *writing* portraits of people. You not only have to pose to him, but you have to talk, laugh, eat, and sing to him ; you have to introduce him to your poor relations and your Aunty Scedents, show him the skeleton in your cupboard, the shoe that pinches, the little rift in your lute, the scars remaining, the marks of that which once hath been, the little raw in your morals, the poem you have never published, and your hopes of immortality. The portrait will then be an *apologia pro vita tua*.

* * *

Some of the home papers question the propriety of an officer accepting a peaceful and ornamental appointment when his regiment is at the front in presence of a still unconquered enemy. The fact of such an officer being the commandant of his regiment is said greatly to aggravate the impropriety. This is undoubtedly

a nice point in military etiquette. But Major White, of the 92nd, has borne the brunt and fury of the war so long that his is surely an exceptional case. There are several officers attached to Government Houses in India who have never done a day's regular duty with their regiments now serving at the front since the war began. Major White has come back from the front, not with the slender distinction of one who has performed a single gallant exploit, but with the substantial honours of one who has conducted his regiment successfully and triumphantly through a series of battles,—battles with our own Commissariat, battles with mountains, rivers and cold, and battles with Afghans. Now I think he may honourably turn to pen and ink. Byron writes,—" 'Tis sweet to win, no matter how, by blood or ink, our laurels :" it is sweeter to win them by both ; and to this Major White may look forward.

***

THE re-appearance of Mr. Aitchison at Simla will be a shock to all that is most objectionable there only less than the change of Viceroys. Every one who desires to have any respect for the Government of India will

rejoice to hear of his appointment. He is on the side of honesty, truth, and candour; and with the strength of his good sense will be a doughty comrade for our good knight of the Red Cross while still associated with the "subtill Archimago."

* * *

THINGS seem quite hopeless in Afghanistan. It would take fully two years to build up any friendly Government at Kabul; and India certainly cannot well afford a further occupation of the country for that period. Abdul Rahman must now be regarded by us with the utmost distrust; yet our dalliance with his interests has rendered him so formidable that it will be exceedingly difficult to set him aside. If we were to leave Kabul now he would march in with all the prestige of a national champion, with the unquestionable support of Russia. The war would thus terminate in disastrous failure; and perhaps India can better afford the expenditure of another fifteen millions, than a second failure in Afghanistan.

No. XVII.

(*July* 1, 1880.)

PERHAPS you may have noticed that the rains have set in? The sky is overcast with dark, puffy clouds; the hot wind has ceased to blow; the entomological world has resurged; and numbers of serpents, I daresay, are gliding about. These phenomina occur annually about this season; and they are popularly attributed to a fall of the mercury in the barometer, by the grace of the Meteorological Reporter to the Government of India. In presence, however, of Sir John Strachey's approaching departure from India, these changes in the weather and in the conditions of insect and reptile life are of little importance.

***

IT may be safely affirmed that Lord Northbrook's cousin is the first Artillery Major who

has ever taken charge of our imperial finances with a seat in the Supreme Council. But the appointment is doubtless a good one, for it rarely happens that the cousins of ex-Viceroys are fit for so very lucrative an office ; and Major Baring's familiarity with Egyptian finance will give him much confidence in dealing with deficits, which now form the most characteristic feature of Indian budgets.

* * *

It is well-known that Sir John Strachey, with all his astuteness, was never able to deal with deficits. He had to convert deficits into the higher denomination of surpluses before he could speak of them at all.

* * *

Evelyn Baring is a man of conspicuous energy, acuteness and ambition ; and he will, I have no doubt, bring his eye-glass and his caustic style of writing and speaking to bear with some good effect on our money matters. There is an alchemy even in his name ; and I only hope he will employ it to convert our rupees into a gold currency.

* * *

Baring's industry is almost superhuman. I

suppose no Private Secretary was ever worked more unsparingly—although he had in Mr. Hart a coadjutor as indefatigable and clear-headed as himself—nevertheless while out here he kept himself abreast of all the current literature of the day, and found time to renew his acquaintance with the Greek classics.

* * *

I SUPPOSE Mr. Hart will succeed his old chief, Mr. Barclay Chapman, as Secretary to the Government of India in the Finance Department. If this is so, especially since Captain Barrington Foote is now out here, they will be able to put "Box and Cox" on the stage at Simla once more.

* * *

POOR Sir Garnet Wolseley's merit has been at last recognised: he has been decorated with the Grand Cross of the Bath. This news will fill members of his society all over the world with satisfaction and joy. There is still one act of justice that his country cannot withhold from him much longer:—he *must* be created a Companion of the Indian Empire.

* * *

Now that his Queen and country have so far

discharged their obligations to him, he may be induced to open a new account, and take the contract for the Rumpa rebellion. This is, as I have pointed out before, precisely the kind of war to develope Sir Garnet's talents. The enemy is barborous, the country is a jungle, and it is not far from the sea, and the whole thing might be put into a ring-fence, or a nut-shell. You have only to mass Brigadier-Generals, Commissary-Generals and Surgeon-Generals on the Coromandel Coast and send up to the capital of the Rumpa district a force of special correspondents under the escort of a flying column to reproduce all the incidents that it is desirable to reproduce of the Ashantee and Zulu wars.

* * *

From your paragraph about the expenditure at Kabul on "political" objects, one would not have supposed the matter to be so serious as it now appears to be. The *Pioneer* declares it to amount to Rs. 30,000 now; and to have been at one period five times greater—not than it now is,—but than it was when Mr. Griffin arrived. This is some unknown quantity above Rs. 1,50,000 a month! Now this statement

would appear to be made on the highest authority, namely, that of Mr. Griffin, as the paragraph is an obvious defence of his policy, and not of the expenditure. No one will deny that Mr. Griffin deserves great credit for reducing this enormous expenditure.

* * *

But the fact of Mr. Griffin having been able to reduce it seems to condemn it; since the situation at Kabul is not materially changed since Mr. Griffin arrived.

* * *

While I write Lord Lytton is pouring down country in a special train to the sea. Simla will see his face no more; but his name will live there in echo and anecdote for ever more. He is made one with Simla: his voice is heard in all her music. He is a portion of the loveliness, which once he made more lovely. Love and loveliness will be reduced ten per cent, by his absence.

* * *

Not to mention names,—Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains and feeds her grief on

his remembered—promises. But he will return no more;—Oh, never more!

* * *

A PARD-LIKE spirit beautiful and swift,
A Lord in desolation masked,—a power
Girt round with weakness; it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent empire.
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow; even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? on the withering flower
The killing sun shines brightly; cross a face
Still hot with deficits; smiles flit apace, apace.

* * *

HE will smile to the last. When falling on your neck, Mr. Editor, to weep, before stepping into the funeral barge, or steam launch, there will still be smiles.

* * *

HIS last words will be:—

"I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island—valley of dear Albion
Where falls much rain and hail and sometimes snow
And ever winds blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
There I will heal me of my grievous wound."

Sir John Bedivere hath flung the Budget Escalibur into the lake: but that nameless claque clothed in their shamelessness, mystic and wonderful, have caught it by the hilt and brandished it, three times three, singing;—"For he's a jolly good fellow," &c.

* * *

When the hull hearing away our lost Arthur looks one black dot against the verge of evening, you will hear a wailing voice upon the sea, like the note of the dying swan of Hughenden.

* * *

"Fair ship that from the East Indian shores
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Lytton's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings and waft him o'er."

* * *

Then, Mr. Editor, you will have to stand on the shore revolving many memories, till on the sea the wailing dies away.

* * *

Now the old order changeth, yielding place to new; before I write to you again Lord Ripon will shine upon us, the sole luminary in our Imperial heavens.

No. XVIII.

(*July* 12, 1880.)

GENERAL STRACHEY'S defence of his brother is most meagre and unsatisfactory. He merely says that a Finance Minister cannot be responsible for little details, and cannot be expected to make his accounts balance to within four or five crores. We already know that the Finance Minister is not expected to keep the accounts, or to control the expenditure, or to collect the revenue, and if responsibility for the budget is to be lifted from his shoulders there will be nothing left for him to do but to nurse his liver and invest his exceedingly large salary to the best advantage in Government securities and wool.

* * *

SIR JOHN STRACHEY'S case is a warning to us all not to make friends with the Mammon of Unrighteousness, or try to appease our creditors with bogus accounts. Before Sir John Strachey became a Director of the late

Bubble Government he was a decidedly respectable personage ; Assistant-Magistrates lifted their hats when they thought of him, natives addressed him as "Gharibparwar," shop-keepers eagerly sought for his paper money. Oh ! what a revolution ! and what a heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall. Little did I dream when he added titles of veneration to that of mild, distant and respectful esteem, that he should ever be obliged to carry newspaper articles, the sharp antidote against disgrace, concealed in that bosom ; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon him in a nation of Joint-Magistrates and Sheristadars. I thought ten thousand paragraphs must have leaped from their type-cases to avenge even a look that threatened him with insult. But the age for South-Sea Bubbles is gone ; that of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded ; and the fury of speculation is extinguished for ever.

* * *

To have fallen himself from the crystal battlement of Respectability, to have fallen from

morn till noon and from noon till dewy eve, a summers' day, was surely terrible enough for tragic purposes; but to have dragged down the whole family as bogus-apologists of his bogus-budget was indeed heaping up the agony past all endurance. General Strachey with nearly a thousand reams of the Famine Commission Report staining his immortal soul, cannot walk across to St. James's Square without encountering half a dozen supercilious enquirers after the health of the dropsical budget.

* * *

THE commission of famine does not appear so heinous to the British public as the commission of errors amounting to four or five millions of money in a simple statement of accounts.

* * *

THE British public generally is both ignorant and indifferent in regard to India. Questions relating to *monsoons, monshees,* and other horrors of a tropical climate are relegated to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the Anglo-Indian settlements at Brompton, Bath, and Cheltenham. The sovereign people

as it rides on its triumphal omnibus, or munches chops in its lordly eating house, thinks less of the pomphlets, pomegranates, and pommelows of Asia than it does of the sewers that wallow under its feet; and surely the sovereign people may think of what it chooses. But no; the *Daily Telegraph* tramples on the ignorance of the sovereign people; then when crushed and bruised holds it up to common contempt and egg-shying. In an article on "The Breaking of the *Monsoon*," that appeared on the 8th of June, the *Daily Telegraph* commits the outrage in question. The article is written in *Daily Telegraphese*, and will, no doubt, be unintelligible to many of your readers; but in one passage, where a fitful gleam of English lights up the gloomy and criminal purpose of the writer, the justice of my indictment will be recognised. The *monsoon* is about to break; but the cataclysm is preceded by an ominous lull:—"during which nature is hushed as if in awe, or rapt expectancy; the natives call it the BURRA CHOOP!"

***

THEN having discharged this appalling bolt at British credulity the cataclysm of *Daily*

Telegraphese bursts upon ten thousand devoted omnibuses and a hundred thousand devoted eating houses. "Then the dark covering of the sky seems to split up and to spill from its caverns violet tinted cataracts of lightening; not isolated shafts or sheets, or shoots of lambent flame, but constant streams of darting, blinding electric fire, the accompaniment of which is one sustained peal of crashing, earsplitting thunder." No wonder that even "women and children silence, and that men speak in the lurid light with lowered accents." A Scotch accent would be no protection against this kind of thing; nothing short of a *burra choop* would avail in such extremities.

* * *

And yet on the staff of the *Daily Telegraph* are two distinguished Anglo-Indians, both close observers of nature and both most charming writers. But the readers of the *D. T.* demand the *D. T.* dialect and *D. T.* style, involving dipsomaniacal cataclysms of polysyllabic periphrase. The *D. T.* accordingly, like Famine Relief, supplies a want that is felt.

* * *

The *minarets* waving o'er fair Istambool,

the infuriated *chillamchees* supporting the panic-striken *bobotcheecannas* and the red-coated *chubutras* bowing before the haughty *Marpeets*, —all these yield in beauty and interest to the *Burra Choop*. The *Burra Choop* is quite the boldest and most striking contribution that has ever been made to the thought and language of the East by the humour and fancy of the West.

* * *

Some months ago, in early spring, a Lord Mayor's Show, or a Cattle Show, I forget which, took place in London, and the *Telegraph* drew attention to the striking coincidence that on the same day in the holy city of Benares the Dassarah Festival was being solemnised. The Dassarah is solemnised usually in autumn; but the difference of longitude accounted for this, and as the highly poetical description given of the *Dassara* would have answered equally well for the Mohorram, Dewali, or Eed, it possessed a value and interest of a general character, quite above particulars of time, or place, or creed.

* * *

As I am not allowed to do so officially I rejoice in private over the successes of the

Chinese in Central Asia; and as I am not at present an unpaid attaché at St. Petersburg, I will venture to say that if I were an influential Mahomedan, like the Sultan of Constantinople, or the Sharif of Mecca, I should now preach a *jehad* in Bukhara, Khokhand, and Khiva, and write books, dedicated to Mr. Gladstone, on Russian misrule in the three Khanates.

* * *

If the Russians were once on the thither side of the Caspian Sea, the situation in Afghanistan would be simplified. We should only have to supply them with arms of precision and invite them to resume their normal avocation of throatcutting. Prince Bismarck would say, in his coarse way, that we might let them stew in their own fat.

* * *

It is patent to all the world that with victorious Chinese at Fort Naryn, Abdul Rahman begins to fade away into the shadow of a shadow. Indeed even Mr. Lepel Griffin becomes a little unsubstantial.

* * *

The Madras people, I hear, are very angry

about the quasi-appointment of Mr. Adam,—who is a common commoner of the commonest, being not even a Baronet. It is true he is a Privy Councillor; but even Mr. Chamberlain is that. However it is impossible to please the people of Madras. They have even clamoured against a double-barrelled Duke. The fact that Mr. Adam was never appointed or nominated at all except by Reuter, has not healed their wounded sensibilities. It is enough that people were ready to believe he had been appointed. It is just possible now that they may get that archetypal prig Mr. Grant Duff, disappointed, soured, and, if possible, more offensive than before the formation of the present Cabinet.

***

THE *Pioneer* says that Sir Ashley Eden is in the running for Madras, and the *Indian Herald* names Sir George Campbell. Many people in Bengal would be exceedingly glad to hear that Sir Ashley Eden was about to be translated; and the House of Commons would vote with acclamation for the deportation of Sir George Campbell to Madras.

***

WHEN will Sir Edwin Johnson make up his

mind to retire? This is a question that urgently demands an answer. There are reasons, too obvious to mention, why he should retire; and why he does not retire, now that the rains have set in, is for him to explain. To the public the retention of his office appears indefensible. A contemporary of yours remarks in a gay and sanguine spirit,—"We have sufficient confidence in Sir Edwin's good feeling and conscientiousness to rely on his at once resigning a post for which he feels himself no longer fitted."

* * *

It is a pity that people will go on staking their reputation, when—to put it gently—*the luck* is against them. Sir John Strachey and Sir Edwin Johnson earned for themselves distinction and honourable repose long ago. But they refused to leave the table, and crying out "Finance is the main," they have lost everything.

* * *

The last "battle" with the Afghans near Padkhao Shana does not seem to have been a very desperate affair. The enemy had been deserted by their leader and were in full flight

"scattered all over the ground" before our men came up. They were accordingly cut down right and left,—to the number of two hundred. Their original strength, as computed by Brigadier Palliser, amounted to "six, or eight hundred men." Our force consisted of three cavalry regiments: and our loss amounted to four sowars. The Kabul correspondent of the *Pioneer* says that "the result of this *brilliant* little action cannot fail to be most beneficial." . . . As our victorious brigade rode into camp "all the regiments turned out and cheered them heartily." It is further stated that two of the officers engaged are to be recommended for the Victoria Cross. The affair was doubtless satisfactory and thoroughly successful. The troops marched and fought well, officers evinced exemplary gallantry, and the Brigadier gave the word gallop, and set the example, killing probably a Brigadiers's share of the Afghans. This is all as it should be. But if an English Brigade of Cavalry cannot cut up a mob of leaderless, scattered, flying Afghans without pæans of victory and a scramble for Victoria Crosses, our notions of fighting must be very different from what they used to be.

No. XIX.

(*July* 20, 1880.)

Sir John Strachey's last Minute discloses a weakness characteristic of the age. He and the other Budgeteers will not accept the bitterness of their fate. They have committed colossal errors. They are conscious of it; every sentence of the Minute discloses this: but they cannot face the spectre of their guilt. They keeping dodging behind one another seeking shelter in a cloudland of figures, and burying their heads in the sands of hope, conjecture and estimate. They are bathed in fiery floods of purgatorial criticism: but they keep jumping out,—only to be shovelled into the flames again.

How different from Clytemnestra!

"I curse fate too,
The deaf, blind fury taking human souls
And crushing them as does a fretful child
Crush its toys and knows not with what skill
Those feeble forms are feigned.

"I curse, I loathe,
I spit on them. It doth repent me not,
I would 'twere yet to do. I have lived my life.
Ah me! We cannot die!—Come torture me,
Ye Furies, for I love not soothing words."

* * *

How different from Promethenus!—

"I am king over myself and rule
The torturing and conflicting throngs within.

* * * * * *

"Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape, or sound of life.
Ah me! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever
No change, no, pause, no hope. *Yet I endure.*"

* * *

How different from Cordelia!

"We are not the first.
Who, with best meaning, have incurred the worst!
For thee, oppressed king, I am cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's frown."

These heroic sufferers can face their ruin and their agony. They do not pamper themselves with hope, or drug themselves with the poppy, the juice of mandragora, the sleeping portions of subterfuge and excuse. Like Othello, they gnaw their underlips; and they suffer quietly. In their day there was no paltering with Hell; no talk of "Eternal Hope." They grimly confronted evil, death, and unending torment.

***

Not so the Budgeteers! Their primary thought is how to shift the blame; how to frame excuses. Sir John Strachey feels that he and his associates, with this mill-stone of a bogus Budget round their necks, are sinking deeper and deeper in the mire: and we hear nothing but their howls for help and mercy. Sir John himself is overwhelmed with the duty of framing new excuses for new disclosures. "I do not intend now to offer any opinion as to the degree of responsibility that may attach to the several officers concerned. . . . If it be found hereafter that there have been *shortcomings* we must be prepared to find some excuses for them." These are the words of the

Minute. The "if" at the beginning of the sentence is effrontry almost amounting to boldness, and little in keeping with the weakness of the conclusion. The word *shortcomings* is certainly an amusing euphemism.

* * *

Up to the present Sir John's success in finding "excuses" has been very moderate indeed. "My conclusion, then, is that the failure of our estimate is due to our *ignorance of the actual expenditure on the army*, rather than to an inadequate *a-priori* appreciation of the probable cost of the field operations." The blundering is, then, attributable to ignorance of facts; and not, as some hoped, to a mere want of foresight. It is blundering *revera*; not in opinion only. "To sum up the whole matter," Sir John adds, "the error in the estimate is, in my judgment, mainly due, not to any misapprehension as to the extent, or character, of the military operations; *but to the fact that we were ignorant of the actual current cost of the war.*" And on this foundation of ignorance the budget superstructure was reared: in this gloomy dripping cold mist of ignorance the fatal deed was done. Now the bottomless past,

and the roofless future open their abysses: now the gibbering of the devils is audible: now for wailing, everlasting wailing!

"Action is transitory,—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle—this way, or that—
'Tis done, and in the after vacancy
We wonder at ourselves, like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure, and dark,
And has the nature of infinity."

* * *

Mr. Ruskin asked a lady to tell him what the subject of a book was in which she seemed interested. She smiled through blushes at first and hesitated; but at length took heart to say that it was all about—"two young people who forgot themselves in a boat." I quote from the last number of the *Nineteenth Century*. You may be sure that the book said little of the momentary forgetfulness; it would be the remembering,—the awaking out of the dream of the bee and the apple, that supplied yarn for the novelist's web. Such yarn is inexhaustible. Lachesis spins it for ever; and our Remorse weaves it into the infinite delirium of death and punishment. This is the tapestry to be wrought now for those

old gentlemen who forgot themselves in a budget.

***

ENGLISH morality seems to lag behind Anglo-Indian morality. Mr. Bradlaugh appears to be far in advance of public opinion at home. To the House of Commons he is altogether a white elephant. Mr. Gladstone doesn't know what to do with him. He is an atheist they say; and the Tories run shrieking away from him. "Take away this unclean thing" is the tone of even moderate journalism. But if Mr. Bradlaugh were at Simla, his religious attitude would never excite a comment. At Simla you couldn't fall down a *khud* without killing an atheist; you couldn't heave a brick without hitting a revolutionary socialist.

***

WHAT amazes me is the fuss made about this unhappy creature Bradlaugh; when Broadhurst is accepted as an honourable member without a demur. To my thinking Bradlaugh is as the Archangel Michael in presence of the man Broadhurst.

***

IT appears from Mr. Hart's apologetic letter

to the papers that Sir James is afraid his Presidency will appear to "the shallow jesters, the rash bavin wits, the capering fools" left behind on the mountains, to have treated the "skipping" Lord with scant courtesy. It was not Sir James Fergusson's fault that people wouldn't cheer: it was not his fault that serious men of business declined to attend the funeral. The Governor dressed the harbour out in cocked hats and bunting: the *Bombay Gazette* played the Dead March in Saul and other people had *their* little jokes. What more could be done?

* * *

A CHARMING girl of the period, a friend of mine, was staying at a country house in Norfork the other day. There was a crowd of guests; and my friend had to double up with the daughter of the house, a quiet girl,—indeed supposed to be serious. When they retired for the night, the girl of the period lighted a cigarette and gracefully disposed of herself in a low chair with her heels on the mantel-piece. "You don't mind my smoking, Mary dear, do you?"—"Oh! *no*," replies

the serious one, "I *adore* it:—it makes you smell just like a man."

* * *

THE short service system for private soldiers in the army surely suggests the expediency for a shorter service for officers, whether military or civil, with graduated pensions. Why should we Cecropids have to stay out here among the serpents and white ants when every Davus, or Tommy Atkins, gets home to his beer and beans after a sojourn of three or four years in this land of captivity? If I were four inches taller than I am, I should like to meet the Secretary of State for India some night in a dark lane and agitate this question.

* * *

AFFAIRS in Central Asia are settling themselves. The Chinese are capturing Russian explorers, and occupying their former post to the north of Kashgaria. The Russians are buying camels and have all their battles with nature and natives to fight over again in Khokand and elsewhere. Afghanistan has no longer any strategical significance. The war will cost fifteen millions and has made its original promoter an Earl; and that is perhaps all it

will accomplish historically. Without Russians in the back ground, a thing like Abdul Rahman is only a ridiculous fantoccino: as indeed are all these long-haired, unwashed Batchas, Walis, and Mustaphas with their rabbles of banditti.

* * *

THE situation of the phantom Wali we have set up is now most amusing. Fate seems to have decreed that all the high solemnities, proclamations, and pomposities of the late unspeakable Lord shall go sweeping into the antres vast and deserts idle of Oblivion amid howls of derision. If my Lord had stayed out here for five years longer we should simply have been laughed and hooted out of India.

* * *

YET he left one admirer behind, an eminent Plenipotentiary and Lieutenant-Governor! It is no longer a secret that Sir Ashley Eden smiled upon Lord Lytton; though it was generally supposed that Sir Ashley's smiles were already pre-engaged for Sir Ashley's achievements.

* * *

THANK GOD we have now got a Viceroy above ridicule and above the patronage of Sir Ashley Eden.

No. XX.

(*July* 31, 1880.)

SINCE the Afghan war commenced nothing has been more remarkable than the conflict between private intelligence, and the filtered news in documents communicated to the public. A private letter tells us of an indecisive skirmish; a *communiqué* speaks of a battle and victory; a private letter relates how a blunder was retrieved by the special favour of fortune; an inspired paragraph points to foresight, generalship, and the foot-prints of Hercules. Many now assert that battles have been fought in despatches only, and that despatches in which battles were not fought have been suppressed. Public confidence in news from Kabul has been sadly shaken, if not destroyed. It is now bluntly said everywhere that blundering has been covered up with laurel leaves; heroism

eclipsed by favouritism, and reputations made and marred at the caprice of various cliques. People who should have been making war, have been trying to make history; and Truth has often been borne down in a terrible struggle between facts and fancy. This was supposed to have been conspicuously the case in regard to Brigadier Massy and the loss of the guns. No one who was not present, and not every one who was present, can tell precisely what happened on that winter's day, when our Kabul garrison was threatened with annihilation; but certainly of those who were present the majority are not disposed to regard Massy as "The Saviour of Sherpur." That officer has been flung backwards and forwards on the ebb and flow of public opinion; at one moment raised to glory, at another washed back to blame and censure; and as Massy rose Roberts sank; and *vice versa*. Accordingly the authorities, with a regard to public opinion which has not always been shown, have alternately punished and rewarded Brigadier Massy. They punished him by withdrawing him from command of a brigade at the front; and rewarded him by giving him

the command of an important brigade in the Punjab.

***

It was boldly stated in some of the London papers that by the general consensus of opinion among officers present at the fight on the 11th of December, Brigadier Massy was acquitted of all blame; and that in being deprived of his Brigade he was believed to be sacrificed to the reputation of General Roberts. It was added, moreover, that the 9th Lancers, to a man, had declared in favour of their old Colonel. At the time I firmly believed this to be true; and I said so; whereas I now have reason to feel sure that it was incorrect in every particular. I have learned from persons present on the occasion, and competent to judge of the facts, that circumstances fully justified the removal of Brigadier Massy; and that, indeed, it was only consideration for his unquestioned gallantry and past reputation which prevented the step being taken at an earlier date. However unpleasant recantation may be, it is due to General Roberts and to the Commander-in-Chief to set this matter right; and I hope that when "able editors'

learn what the truth is, (as they undoubtedly will eventually) they will not hesitate to give it every publicity in their power.

***

In a few weeks the war, which was imprudently commenced, will be imprudently brought to a close. At no period since the frontier was first crossed has Afghanistan been more unsettled than it is now. Our departure will be the signal for a general struggle for plunder and power, and if Abdul Rahman succeeds in rising above the surface of anarchy and securing the Amirship, we may rest assured that, as a friend of Russia, his little finger will be bigger than the thigh of his uncle.

[The foregoing Reflections, like those which follow, were in type before news came of the events on the Kandahar side.]

***

What has been gained by the war? Has Abdul Rahman consented to receive and protect an English Embassy at Kabul? The establishment of such an embassy was, I believe, the primary purpose of the war. Our position at Kandahar cannot be pointed to as one of the results of the war. It was not necessary to

spend fifteen millions and march, with great loss of life, to Kabul in order to occupy Kandahar. Moreover, things are by no means satisfactorily settled even at Kandahar.

* * *

Now that Sir John Strachey has found, and published all the available excuses for the bogus budget, Major Newmarch is to be promoted to the Military Secretaryship to the Government of India. The *Gazette* announces the appointment in these terms—"I have thus succeeded in proving that we this year committed errors representing, at least, nine millions sterling in the Budget; and I would bring to the notice of Government the valuable aid afforded me, in arriving at this satisfactory result, by Sir Edwin Johnson, Mr. Chapman, and, in a more special degree, Major Newmarch. Major Newmarch is already favourably known to H. E. the Viceroy as brother-in-law to Sir Henry Norman; and I trust, therefore, that, in recognition of these important services to the State, he may be appointed Secretary to the Government of India in the Military Department."

* * *

JOKING apart, I believe Major Newmarch

is a most meritorious and industrious official; and likely to make as good a Military Secretary, as any other man's brother-in-law; or even as Sir Owen Burne's brother. He is certainly popular, and this is something.

***

TALKING of popularity, there can be no doubt but that Lord Ripon has taken the hearts of all respectable people at Simla by storm. While dignified, he is yet genial, anxious to please, and simple in his manners. He is thoroughly English. It is not his ambition to acquire the pertness of a restaurant garçon or the 'form' of a *petit maitre*. Though patron of the Simla Fine Arts Exhibition, he has never had any criminal intercourse with the Muses, as dilettante, virtuoso, or amateur.

***

LORD HARTINGTON is coming out to interview India. There are, no doubt, several things to be learnt in the country, which it would do a Secretary of State little harm to know. But these are just the things which a Secretary of State will never hear of in India. He will be led about by some Secretariat mummy and be subjected to all the fly-swallowing of a Famine

Commissioner. Or he will do the note-book trick like the unspeakable product of the Elgin Burghs:

"As well might Grant Duff, in the Fleet
Have been fast bound, a begging debtor;
He travelled here, he travelled there;
But not the value of a hair
Was heart, or head the better."

***

THE Duke of Argyll was always planning a trip to India when in office; but he never could make up his mind to trust his dignity so far away from Inverary. Would the Government of India supply him with white elephants, Syrian asses, horses of the Nejd, and double first class Rajas? The subject led to infinite correspondence. It forms one of the thickest files in the India Office.

There's something in a cocoanut;
There's something in a huge baboo;
But through the East I'll never pass
Until I get a little ass,
Shaped like an Arabic tattoo.

***

THE rival advertisements of the *St. James's Budget* and the *Pall Mall Budget* that appeared

in the *Pioneer* of the 24th tell their own tale of bitterness and weakness. Fancy the *Pall Mall* having to advertise itself as "the most useful and interesting paper for Englishmen abroad"; with angry allusion to Mr. Greenwood's "extravagant advocacy of Jingoism!" With equal dignity Mr. Greenwood's advertisement retorts on "the arrangement that was made by which the *Pall Mall Gazette* was to give up all its old opinions and take to new ones." This reminds one of Mrs. Gamp's soothing syrup:—"Beware of spurious imitations."

* * *

Mr. Charles Alfred Elliott, the quondam Famine Man, now the Census Man, some day, perhaps, the Post Office, or the Legislative Man, —a person of universal genius, recently discovered in the Secretariat of the North-Western Provinces, writes a characteristically temperate letter to the *Spectator* on the subject of Mr. Laing's article in the *Nineteenth Century*. He writes because Mr. Laing "shows neither sobriety, nor accuracy"; because Mr. Laing "begins with a startling misapprehension," and proceeds to "a yet more extraordinary

error." He "abstains from any imputations on the motives of Mr. Laing;" and he thinks that it would have been well if Mr. Laing had observed a similar course of moderation and Christian charity in his attack on Sir John Strachey's budget. In all this we hear the voice of the Strachey-Lytton claque.

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One sentence will give the key to Mr. Elliott's opinions and enable your readers to form an estimate of their value. "The land revenue itself could be increased by 50 per cent. in most parts of India, without pressing as severely on the land-owners as it did thirty years ago." This is what comes of touring about with Mr. Caird and writing blue-books on Agriculture in the India Office with General Strachey.

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"No man," continues this oracle, "with the slightest information on the subject, can affect to believe that the weight of taxation in India is severely felt, or that there are not many ways in which it could, if necessary, be increased."

If "the slightest information" bring the bliss of such opinions, it were indeed folly to be wise.

No. XXI.

(*August* 7, 1880.)

The disaster at Khushk-i-Nakhud is the Isandhlana of the Afghan war. It threatens our position not only at Kandahar, but at Kabul; it threatens to revive the Ghazni faction; it inspires the enemy with new hope throughout Afghanistan, and it cannot fail to have some demoralising effect upon our own troops.

* * *

It cannot fail to have some demoralising effect upon our troops; because it shakes their confidence in those who conduct operations. The best troops get unsteady when they feel that they are being led about in the dark;

when they feel that there is no intelligence regarding the enemy's movements; and when they know that the officers to whose guidance they are committed are men, however gallant, however able, practically ignorant of war.

* * *

General Primrose, Brigadier Burrows, and Colonel St. John are not in any way to blame for wanting that experience which would be so invaluable to them now; but the guilt of blood is at the door of those who entrusted the lives of so many brave men to the incapacity which this want of experience implies. The curse of the seniority system once more lies heavy upon us.

* * *

Yet I hope they are not going to send Sir Garnet Wolseley out. I know that this is the popular cry on the first paralysis of panic; and this is its own condemnation. We have many good men out here. The Government will admit that there must be some intermediate course between entrusting divisions and brigades to men who have never seen a shot fired and giving one man a monopoly of all our fighting. There is a General Officer to every six hundred

men in the British army; they surely cannot all have learnt their goose-step in vain.

* * *

In the news that has come from Kandahar nothing is more alarming than the circumstance that two commanding officers were in the first flight of fugitives. As the Captain is the last man to leave a sinking ship, the Colonel is, of course, the last man to leave a regiment in extremities. Christian courtesy and charity allow us no alternative but to suppose that the regiments commanded by these officers were annihilated; for a regiment is not a thing that can be forgotten like an umbrella, and even a civilian knows that commanding officers are not mounted with a view to their bringing into headquarters the earliest tidings of defeat. Yet while our information is so imperfect, the Bishop of Bombay has no business to abuse the attention of the Cathedral congregation by aspersing the character of men whose conduct, for all we know, may have been consistently honourable and soldier-like. When he enters upon these fields, he divests himself of everything that lends authority to his voice. The Bishop no longer

speaks; but a person who is very young, very well-meaning, but not always very wise.

* * *

THE Medical Service is to be congratulated on the number of doctors that escaped; but this also has its serious aspects. It looks as if there were no wounded, it looks as if nothing but death had been left behind.

* * *

THE situation at Kabul is most critical. All the spare ammunition, and all the warm clothing have been sent down to India; and a winter campaign is quite on the cards. Two hundred rounds of ammunition a man will not see us through much fighting.

* * *

IT is not impossible that Abdul Rahman may give us the slip; and even if he does come dancing bashfully to Mr. Griffin's piping we must trust him with many misgivings. Yakub Khan was believed to be faithless, and Wali Shere Ali of Kandahar clearly played into the hands of Ayub Khan.

* * *

IN my village we are all talking a good deal of nonsense about the complication. I join the

common cackle, as it is so lonely to be sensible; I say that we must plough Afghanistan with asses and sow it with salt. I say that we must withdraw specials and politicals, cut the telegraph wires, stifle the Post Office and turn a great army loose upon the ruffian foe. I say that we must bury their cities in blood and ashes, hew their sirdars in pieces like Agag and disarm the whole population to the last toothpick. I raise my voice and stamp my foot; but I do not illustrate these righteous transports with promiscuous swearing, like a member of Council and an Under-Secretary whose names, for this once, I will refrain from pillorying.

* * *

I DON'T know that my opinion is much more valuable than the Bishop of Bombay's; but I may be permitted to express a modest hope that the British Government will raise no more Pepper's Ghosts like Yakub Khan, Abdul Rahman, and the Wali, Shere Ali. These political tricks are very clever and amusing, but they ultimately lead to exposure and ridicule. How the infidels must now jeer at the grand installation which took place in Kandahar the other

day! We can afford no more Owen Glendowerism when dealing with this extremely practical and unimaginative people in sheepskins and knives.

* * *

We have again reason to complain of the information that percolates to us through Government. We learn from General Primrose and the Marquis of Hartington that the brigade has been "annihilated;" while the Press Commissioner's unhonored shade (a stupendous Baboo :—alto-relievo) telegraphs that General Burrows has met with a reverse. On each side the statement is scandalously wide of the mark.

* * *

It is most comforting to reflect that sturdy old General Phayre is pushing up to the front. Those Afghans who suppose he can only sing psalms will learn their mistake. He is a thorough soldier; and Ayub Khan would do well not to presume on his piety. These God-fearing soldiers, who buckle on the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, show a very rough front to an enemy. They ars inspired with a kind of prophetic Hebrew wrath: they impre-

cate and they smite the foe. They say,—"In the name of the Lord will I destroy them."

* * *

We shall now await with painful interest tidings of the poor fellows left out at Khelat-i-Ghilzai. If Ayub Khan leaves Kandahar for subsequent operations, and strikes away for Ghazni, it will go hard with this little garrison. But we must hope that it will prove our Rorke's Drift.

* * *

I hope that General Stewart will now march back to Kandahar and wipe away this fellow Ayub. The Kabul garrison is strong in point of numbers and could spare a larger force than General Stewart has just contributed to it.

* * *

I see that the *Englishman* publishes among those who first got back to Kandahar the name of General Burrows. This is obviously a mistake for Dr. Elton Burroughs, the sporting Surgeon of the 3rd Sind Horse. I mention it; as a confusion between these names is not unlikely to recur.

* * *

The *Asian* has a letter from a coffee planter pointing out the disastrous effect of permitting

the people of Coorg to carry arms. "A native," the writer very justly remarks, "who is allowed to carry a sword, or gun will never do anything else;" he makes it his calling. The consequence is that coffee, and every other industry in Coorg, languishes for want of labour. Coolies have to be imported, as if Coorg were Trinidad; while the sturdy Coorg goes marching about with his gun exterminating the game. That Coorg is thoroughly mismanaged under existing arrangements is the unanimous opinion of the planters. The administrative commission of this grand little province seems to have been set apart as an asylum for superannuated colonels of the Madras Staff Corps, with consequences that may well be conjectured.

* * *

I PREDICT that plaintiff, defendant, witnesses, and all concerned will regret the Maitland *vs.* Beresford case for some years to come. The scene that occurred after these young Gentlemen had "dined rather heavily" at the Wheler Club is not a pleasant picture of Anglo-Indian life and manners. The conversation reported is almost pathetic in its slang imbecility; and discloses a picture of racing life, upon which no one who

cares for English sport can look without the sincerest regret.

* * *

THE Foreign Secretary's appeal for subscriptions towards a monument for poor Cavagnari, Hamilton, Jenkyns, and the gallant Guides will meet with a hearty response in every part of India. But Mr. Lyal should give the idea some definite shape, and make proposals as to the manner in which the money subscribed might be best employed. The monument, I think whatever form it is to take, ought to be erected in Lahore ; and Kabul should be compelled to contribute towards it such a sum as Kabul will have reason to remember.

No. XXII.

(August 13, 1880.)

It is intelligible that General Primrose requires reinforcements, but it is impossible to suppose that he, or rather, the occasion, requires a Division from Kabul and a Division from the Punjab, in addition to Phayre's Brigade. A Brigade may not be enough; but an army-corps is surely far beyond the mark. It is questionable whether the country round Kandahar, in its present state, can support such a force; it is questionable whether we have any one who can handle so large a body of men.

* * *

General Roberts would not be the most senior officer present, and it is not impossible that the command might devolve on one, who

appears to have been unequal to a far less responsible position.

* * *

PERHAPS Roberts's Division will occupy Ghazni and thus insulate Kabul from the electric disturbances of Kandahar.

* * *

IT is an occasion like the present, when the Presidency is depleted of European troops, that illustrates the importance of the Volunteer movement. While the bulk of the native army is away on service little more is wanted in any of the Presidencies than three or four companies of well drilled European volunteers.

* * *

FOR all India it would be well to have one force of volunteers, with a uniform organisation, discipline and dress, so that a merchant, lawyer, or Government servant transferred from Madras to Lahore might find himself as much at home in the corps of the latter place as he did in that of his former station.

* * *

GREAT Rifle Meetings for all India might be

held by turns at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Allahabad, and Lahore; or some central place, like Jabalpur, might be made the permanent Wimbledon. The railways would carry volunteers free of charge, and their families at half the ordinary fares; Government would supply a camp, Mr Kellner refreshments, the *Bombay Gazette* reporters; and the Empress, Viceroy, Governors, Lieutenant-Governors, Maharajas, and Nawabs prizes to be shot for. It would be economy for Government to spend a good deal of money on this kind of thing.

***

After reading the account given in the newspapers of the Buller Divorce Case, the feeling uppermost in every well regulated mind, will be one of relief on finding that Lord Marcus Beresford's virtue has come out of the ordeal, not only untarnished, but refined, like gold that has been tried in the fire. He may well say now to his brother at Simla,—"The fining pot of a Civil Court is for silver; but the furnace of a Divorce Court for gold." When we consider that he never even kissed Mrs. Buller; but, during the many phases of this slow ripen-

ing attachment, enjoyed a romantically platonic intimacy, we can still entertain some hopes for the morals of society. For Mr. Flower, however, we must shed a tear ; for what happened to his character in the Divorce Court, and to his whiskers at the railway station. He is too full blown for a button-hole now.

***

Major White leaves the cake and ale of Peterhoff to rejoin the 92nd now that there is a prospect of more fighting. This is, indeed, "good form." For already Major White has reaped all that the war can yield to him personally in the way of honour and praise. But a soldier should "covet honour," he should be, as the unspeakable pocket-book man says, "a fanatic for his profession."

***

Mr. Muir, A. D. C., as a Brigade-Major of Cavalry will give many an Iago occasion to say,—"But there's no remedy ; 'tis the curse of the service ; preferment goes by letter, and affection, not by the old gradation." Mr. Muir, since he left the 6th Foot, has passed his time as a cavalry officer chiefly between Gov-

ernment House, Naini Tal, and Government House, Simla; and though a good fellow and deservedly popular, has had little opportunity of showing any capacity for important staff employment. Service in the Viceroy's household does not qualify for staff employment in the field. The 15th Hussars, which will form a part of the Brigade to which Mr. Muir is appointed, could supply several Brigade-Majors with greater knowledge of Afghanistan and more experience of operations in the field than Mr. Muir enjoys. But even in extremities, and under a Viceroy who is a man of honour and high principle, the Government of India cannot give up its crooked ways.

***

THE Government of Bombay is just as bad. The disaster at Khushk-i-Nakhud is the fruit of a moral obliquity in making appointments, the guilt of which is shared pretty equally between the Supreme and Local Governments.

***

NEWS received viâ Madras regarding Sir Frederick Haines' orders to General Warre, on

the subject of General Primrose's orders to General Burrows, does not, in my opinion, shift the responsibility from the shoulders of those who in the first instance sent Generals Primrose and Burrows and Colonel St. John to Kandahar.

* * *

From information now in the possession of the public, it is quite justifiable to blame Colonel St. John (who had cavalry at his disposal for reconnaissances, and all the resources required for obtaining secret intelligence) for being utterly ignorant of the strength and position of Ayub Khan's army. We may naturally ask what Colonel St. John was doing during that fortnight when General Burrows remained inactive before the fight. The phantom Wali had already slipped through his fingers; so there could have been no political functions of the atr-and-pan and Mizaj-i-pursi description to engage him. The movements of Ayub Khan did seem to occupy some of his thoughts; but all the information he appears to have been able to give General Burrows at the last moment was that the advanced guard

of the enemy's army had reached a point only three miles distant.

***

So poor General Burrows goes out in the dark with his small brigade to encounter an ememy of unknown strength, of unknown organisation, on unknown ground. For all General Burrows had learnt from Colonel St. John, the enemy might have numbered forty thousand men, armed throughout with weapons of precision and provided with Gatlings and mitrailleuses.

***

It will be as well for General Primrose and his staff to remember that now Ayub Khan has in his hands the twelve hundred Martini-Henry rifles of our poor fellows who were killed, together with a considerable quantity of ammunition.

***

Is it not a little premature for Abdul Rahman to begin coining money at Kabul? I thought that he had quite enough rupees to last him till things had settled down bearing

the image and superscription of Mr. Lepel Griffin.

***

I SEE that the *Times of India* receives as an extract from the *Western Morning News* one of your own Orphan's humble parodies about the simpering Lord. What a barren world it is, when the *Morning News* of the radiant Occident has to pick up the crumbs that fall from a poor Orphan's table!

***

THE *Englishman* speaks of Sir Neville Chamberlain, Sir Frederick Roberts, and Sir Donald Stewart as being in the running for the sinecure at present so happily filled by Sir Frederick Haines. The first of these three is the only one of sufficient standing to have a chance of the appointment; and the last is the only one sufficiently free from red tape and sufficiently regardless of the opinion of all other cocked-hats to be of any use in the appointment; while the intermediate K. C. B. is the only one who cares a fig whether he gets the appointment or not. Either Sir Neville Chamberlain, or Sir Donald

Stewart would refuse the Commander-in-Chief-ship or the Presidentship of the first English Republic on the merest whim. It would be difficult to find two other men, with equal qualifications for high employment, who are so utterly devoid of personal ambition. It may be said without disparagement that General Roberts is made of more homely stuff. But General Roberts, with his many practical qualities, is quite good enough for this work-a-day world. Chamberlain and Stewart will do for dreams and poetry.

No. XXIII.

(*August* 21, 1880.)

THE life of an officer on the Viceroy's staff during war is somewhat enviable. He watches the course of events and cuts in whenever and wherever he pleases, superseding all who have borne the heat and burden of the day. He can live at Peterhoff and participate in all the glory while he escapes all the drudgery of campaigning. He may put in an appearance at a battle now and then, just to qualify for any honours that may be going; but he is exempted from the privations, the watchings, and the dull and onerous routine of camp life, through which others have to pass to win the short, bright hours of a fight. The real hunting, the search, and the protracted beat are avoided, and he is

brought up at the end of the day, like a Raja, to get the first shot, or, perhaps still later, to bear away the spoils. That he is a fine, gallant young fellow with all the best qualities of a soldier latent in him does not affect the question in any way.

***

THE appointment of Colonel Baker to a Brigade was, at the time, considered to be the last degree of favouritism and unfairness to those already in the field, of which even a Viceroy could be guilty, and when Colonel Villiers joined the army across the frontier, the most complaisant Simla Generals hesitated to give him staff employment over the heads of others who had earned promotion in other fields than those in which Colonel Villiers was distinguished.

***

Now comes the most inexcusable appointment of any,—Mr. C. Muir, son of Sir William Muir, and A. D. C. to the Viceroy, to be Brigade Major of Cavalry with General Murray. Colonel Baker was a man of some mark ; and so was Colonel Villiers in his own peculiar line ; but Mr. Muir has hitherto had no oppor-

tunity of proving his capacity for field service; nor has he had the indiscretion to drag his aiguillettes through a Divorce Court. There is, therefore, no pressing reason why he should leave that circle of which he is now so conspicuous an ornament. Mr. Muir is like the labourer who comes at the eleventh hour and gets a penny, as if he had toiled since the morning; indeed Mr. Muir gets twopence, for he gets—over the heads of many cavalry officers, who have endured the hardships of the war and proved their fitness for staff employment—one of the most responsible and coveted appointments. It is a marked slight on the officers of the 15th Hussars, who have already taken a highly honourable part in the war, and who are now going to join the Mooltan Brigade.

* * *

But such an appointment not only disappoints the reasonable expectations of real working soldiers; but it imperils the efficiency of an entire Brigade. It is of a piece with the appointment of General Primrose and Brigadier Burrows; and it is highly discreditable to Sir Frederick Haines, or whoever suggested it. It is a piece of abominable jobbery; such job-

bery as has already brought shame and disaster upon our arms.

* * *

MAJOR WHITE simply rejoining his regiment, when there appeared to be a prospect of more fighting, is a commentary on the Peterhoff staff appointments which reflects very great credit on Major White.

* * *

IT is wonderful how a few smooth words will dress up failure as success. The Government is assuming a triumphant tone though it only requires a momentary retrospect to see that the present retreat from Kabul marks the *denouement* of a colossal failure. The first expedition, which was insultingly stopped at Ali Musjid, had for its object the establishment of a friendly mission at Kabul. The second expedition had for its objects the wiping out of this insult, together with the establishment of a diplomatic mission at Kabul. The third expedition had for its objects the avenging of the murder of our envoy, his suite and escort, and the establishment of our political ascendancy in Kabul. Not one of these objects has been, in any degree, effected. Each expedition has severally

failed in the task assigned; eminently the last. No mission has been established at Kabul; the fining of the city, the destruction of the Balla Hissar, the dismantling of all the forts and the disarmament of the people,—the whole programme of vengeance has been abandoned; our political ascendancy at Kabul has now been wiped out of the region of dreams even, since we have appeared before Abdul Rahman, the protégé of Russia, as supplicants, foisted him upon the people of Kabul, built up his authority with money and arms, and have now finally left him without any return to make to us, without any engagements to fulfil, without a word about the famous "friendly mission."

* * *

And now the retreat of the ten thousand has begun under the fabulous Hippogryphon and a few subordinate generals. The fabulous Hippogryphon is proving to himself and to the subordinate generals, and explaining to the Mock Turtle at Simla in telegraphic despatches that Kabul has been satisfactorily settled and the Eastern Question solved. The Mock Turtle, in his turn, explains this to the ghost

of the Press Commissioner; and the Ghost of the Press Commissioner, in the old fumbling style with which we are so familiar, tries to explain this to the public.

* * *

THE only serious difficulty which now remains in connection with Afghanistan is how to glorify the fabulous Hippogryphon sufficiently. He can never be yoked in the Punjab plough again, after riding about with escorts of general officers; and it seems doubtful whether he will allow himself to be fastened on to a star of India and turned into a young comet. Perhaps he will be made a companion of the Duke of Buckingham and the Indian Empire.

* * *

PUTTING such a paltry thing as Ayub Khan under the steam-hammer of Sir Frederick Robert's army is one of the greatest absurdities of an absurd and ill-conducted war. Because Ayub Khan was able to massacre a small unsupported body of troops it does not follow that an army corps is wanted to beat him. At present, it would seem that Ayub Khan has not more than 12,000 troops with him; but we are not going

to touch him until we have got together two Major Generals, seven or eight Brigadiers, and upwards of twenty-four thousand men. When we can only meet Afghans with the odds on our side we are assuredly entering upon a new epoch of our military history.

* * *

But Ayub Khan is not such a March Hare as to wait for this cataclysm of enemies. He will melt away like a summer cloud. There will be nothing left of his army, except the smell, by the time General Roberts reaches Kandahar. What a glorious thing it would be if General Primrose's people were to sally out of Kandahar now and salt Ayub's tail with a sound thrashing! The modest little spring flower would blossom in the dust, like a good deed. General Warre's horn would then be exalted. We should all say,—"a Primrose by the Helmund's brim, a good old Primrose was to him; and it was something more":—something of the nature of a K.C.B., I daresay.

* * *

"The Logaris have proved very friendly to General Roberts's force." They have recommended it—"to go home by the Shuturgurdan

Pass," as they can run down and thrash Ayub Khan. "Thank you for nothing," replies the eminent Bobs; "and who'll get the K.C.B's I should just like to know?" strikes in the Robroy Brigadier, already luminous with stars.

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I HEAR that shares in the Municipal Corporation have fallen since the C. D. Act was finally settled and withdrawn from discussion. It was a subject that lent itself to talk. Instead of squandering it in a dozen sittings, you might have used it with economy for a year, and then let it go straining along, parcelled and shorn, a foiled circuitous wanderer, like Mr. Arnold's Oxus, through select committees,—and so, through Duncan Road, into oblivion.

***

SOME weeks ago you drew attention to the corrupting of chiefs in and around Kabul, and you also drew Mr. Lepel Griffin, who shook his fist at you both in the *Civil and Military Gazette* and in the *Pioneer*. I am pleased to see that both the *World* and *Vanity Fair* entirely corroborate all you said; and *Vanity*,

in a letter direct from Kabul, brings independent testimony to bear upon the question.

* * *

As regards your "Patriotic Fund Meeting" I may be allowed perhaps to express a hope that Government will not feel relieved of any responsibility in regard to the widows and orphans of soldiers who have fallen in this campaign because charitable people come forward with their alms. Against the voice of public opinion a crazy Government hurries us into war; and then misconducting the war lands us in defeat and disaster. At this point the public, hitherto disregarded, is appealed to. Government through whose fatuous blundering families have been wrecked, wives made widows and children orphans, now asks the public for alms to repair the ruin it has created. A Government debauched with nepotism and favouritism is glad to receive charity in its extremity from a public whose opinion it has ever treated with contempt and contumely.

* * *

I SAY that "Government receives charity:" because the charity appealed for is destined for the widows and orphans of men who have

perished in the service of Government; it is intended for the very household of Government. A Government that can afford to let nine millions of money slip through its fingers, without observing that it has dropped anything, can surely provide for the families of those who have fallen in its service.

* * *

After this provision had been secured, it would then be the duty of the public to come forward with supplementary aid in recognition of the fact that, though directed by a fatuous Government, the troops that have perished in Afghanistan have perished gloriously in the name of England, and according to the traditions that have spread "our ocean empire with her boundless homes" over the globe and fixed "her throne in our vast Orient."

No. XXIV.

(*August* 28, 1880.)

HER MAJESTY witnesses the departure of the troopship Jumna with the reliefs ordered to India in view of the disaster at Khusk-i-Nakhud, and great enthusiasm is manifested; in fact, a public demonstation is thus organised for the magnifying of Ayub Khan's importance and the emphasing of our own abasement. Now the Viceroy should go to Bombay and await the arrival of the Jumna; and we should all try to behave towards the Jumna as if she were the Phœnix and we were the belcaguered garrison of Londonderry.

* * *

IN the meanwhile the ironclad from Kabul and the ironclad from Quetta are racing for the crazy cockle-boat that has issued from Herat; and when they succeed in frightening

it away, or smashing it up, we shall then receive Royal and Viceroyal messages of congratulation, and there will be a general jubilee, till the next great blunder drags us down again to sackcloth and ashes.

***

THE English are becoming the most hysterical people in the world. The Government of England and the English Government of India are always beslobbered with tears for the results of their own blundering ; or grinning a fool's laugh over some knavish trick of diplomacy, or some paltry victory gained over savages.

***

THE only people within our borders who have profited by the Khusk-i-Nakhud disaster are the four Bogus Budgeteers. Although the Secretary of State has been denouncing what he considers to be their deliberate dishonesty, public attention has been withdrawn from them, and their ringleader has quietly obtained an extension of the period during which he will be permitted to draw the pay of a Member of Council.

***

I SEE that the papers are all much moved by

the thought that Sir John Strachey, on leaving India, will retire from the Indian service. But Sir John Strachey has already retired from the Civil Service; and on resigning his seat in Council will have no further connection with India, save as a pensioner. His retirement from the Civil Service was the wisest financial measure he ever conceived; for by this retirement he now draws the pay of a Member of Council in addition to the pension of a retired civilian.

* * *

THE Johnson family still hang on at Simla as if they were the most successful of administrators and financiers. Neither General Edwin, nor Colonel Allen, seem to know what an incubus they are upon Lord Ripon's administration. I believe that Colonel Allen is anxious to resume his appointment at the Horse Guards; but feels unwilling to abandon India at this critical time!

* * *

As for Colonel C. C. he must stay on to nurse poor old Sir Frederick.

* * *

ON the gilded side of India I observe a tend-

ency to blame the ginger-bread of the Bombay Army for the disaster at Khusk-i-Nakhud and the present humiliating attitude of the British garrison in Kandahar. This is most ungenerous. Bombay has no Goorkhas and Sikhs, it is true; but Bombay has many native regiments that never failed in former days to respond gallantly to a skilful and bold lead. Bombay must be prepared to resist an attempt which the Government of India will certainly make to shift the blame of failure from Commanders and Political Officers on to the sepoys and sowars of the Bombay Army.

* * *

By all means make Primrose, Burrows, and St John K. C. B's, but do not lay their sins to the account of poor heathen, shut out from the absolution of knighthood, and driven like sheep to the slaughter on eight rupees a month.

* * *

You will see in the *St. James' Gazette*, under the heading of "An Afridi Yarn," what reads very much like a paraphrase on an article you published some weeks ago on political bribery and corruption at Kabul. It is pointed out how Mr. Griffin's eagerness to clear himself

exposed the whole situation, and more than corroborated your statements.

* * *

I NOTICE frequent allusions in the Bombay and Madras papers to the title 'Lord' often applied to Bishops in the Colonies and India. I believe the title in England had its origin in the territorial jurisdiction exercised formerly by the spiritual Peers, and still dimly shadowed forth by their position in the House of Lords. When a Bishop was Prince Palatine of Durham the title of Lord was hardly inapplicable; but when a Bishop is, in regard to his temporal authority, something less than the Chaplain-General of a Presidency, it is surely a little absurd. The Bishops of the Scotch Episcopal Church have had the good sense to drop the prefix.

* * *

THE *Nineteenth Century* seems to be used now by many distinguished men as a kind of waste-paper receptacle. Mr. Tennyson shoots his rubbish into it, and Mr. Gladstone contributes what he has had no opportunity of discharging in post-cards. Now Mr. Ruskin has swept together, under the title of "Fiction

Fair and Foul," a dust heap of prejudices and fancies regarding literature in particular and morality generally, which is altogether unworthy of his position as a writer. Here and there we see a gem sparkle ; but it only makes the rubbish of the mass in which it lies all the more conspicuous.

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In the collapse of the lottery at Chandernagore, I, in common with all your readers, have suffered a very serious loss. For many years I have regarded these lotteries as the rich uncle who was about to die in my behalf. I feel now that in one cruel catastrophe I have lost an uncle a year for the rest of my life. It was more than a competence; it was the shadow of fortune on my path Nature cannot compensate us for the loss: she doles out to us rich uncles with a more grudging hand. As for myself I had invested a great part of next year's first and second prizes in silver mines left by General Roberts in and about Kabul. I had engaged a prospector to sink shafts in Musk-i-Alum,—I mean the Afghan one; not the Punjobby.

***

So Simla has been celebrating our political

triumph at Kabul and our military triumph at Kandahar by holding private theatricals! I hope the Johnson family are not so engrossed with wigs and velvet breeches as to lose sight of poor old General Primrose locked up in the citadel. If the Simla people would only play at doing their duty and balancing our accounts it would be considered by all India as the most admirable drama yet seen on those boards.

No. XXV.

(*August* 31, 1880.)

A GENERAL Order by H. E. the Commander-in-Chief notifies that the force under the command of Sir Frederick Roberts will be called "the Kabul-Kandahar Force." This is Sir Frederick Haines' contribution to the conquest of Southern Afghanistan. This General Order will be read to every regiment in India: full dress will be worn: and a few simple manœuvres in the goose step will be executed.

* * *

LORD LYTTON bequeathed to the conquest of Southern Afghanistan that altogether too exquisite and priceless boon, a Political Officer, in the person of Colonel St. John. One cannot think of that most gracious and touch-

ing legacy without I know not what of gratitude and joy: one can hardly speak of it without striking Anglo-Saxon or Mediæval attitudes pre-Raphael-wise and bursting into passionate floods of gladsome laughter,—or tears, as the case may be.

* * *

For the gift of General Primrose and Brigadier Burrows, regarding which emotion, (especially a stertorous sobbing and intermittent sneeze) will hardly permit me to write, future generations of Afghans will have, I suppose, to thank General Warre. I have not heard that any one else has started up to claim the making of these appointments.

* * *

It is most comfortable to think that even if Government were disposed to send another expedition to Kabul, the strength of the fortifications we have left behind with the money, arms, and ammunition, would render the attempt almost impracticable. The Government of India is a Frankenstein that may well tremble before the monster it has created.

* * *

If we had gone on taking Kabul much longer

we should have had the Kabulees returning our visit and holding camps of exercise at Peshawur. I hear they have already started Political Officers and Doctors ; and we may be sure that Special Correspondents and walking gentlemen will supervene.

* * *

So Richard is also among the Prophets !—I think he might have waited till we had finished reading the report of the Famine Commission ; for I suppose he will go over the same ground. He will certainly not go over less ground. I can fancy I hear him say that he had written a thousand pages in a thousand consecutive hours, winning a thousand rupees from Sir John Astley.

* * *

Dr. Tanner is to be appointed a permanent Famine Commissioner attached to the Government of India. It will be his duty to teach the people of India how to fast. Strachey, Caird and Co. will create the necessity.

* * *

The book on convict life, recently published at home, is believed to have been written by a member of the Scotch Bar, a Sheriff-Deputy

in the Highlands, a scholar and a fisherman who violated the peace and propriety of Scotch society some years ago by committing forgery. Your north-country readers will know to whom I refer.

* * *

THE (London) *Times* is preparing the minds of its readers for the withdrawal of the English from India; the winding up of the imperial concern. This happy conclusion of all our troubles in the East is rendered necessary, the flatulent thunderer thinks, by the quagmire of misrepresentation and blundering to which Lord Lytton's too faithful servants have reduced our finances; and by the ruin of our military prestige on the North-West Frontier by Khusk-i-Nakhud.

* * *

THE final embarkation will take place at the Apollo Bunder. The Viceroy and the official who sells American drinks will be the last to leave the sinking Empire. The gurgling cry of the Bengalees and Parsees will be the last sound heard before the waves of Mahomedan and Mahratta anarchy finally close over the wreck of Oriental civilisation. The ul-

timate Baboo raising his oily head above the storm-flood of desolation will be heard apostrophising the setting splendour,—"Is this your vaunted metempsychosis! is this your boasted jurisprudence!"

***

I HEAR it is proposed to form an Anglo-Indian settlement in England. An estate will be purchased, bungalows built, native servants imported, a Barri Mem-Sahib appointed, a Parsee shop established, and our eccentric mode of life introduced in every particular, even to mosquitoes and Rajas.

No. XXVI.

(*September* 8, 1880.)

I HAVE just been reading for the second or third time with renewed delight (as far as the joke goes) Major W. Jacob's excellent parody on General Roberts' despatches. Major Jacob and Lieut. D'Aguilar, of the Engineers, were engaged on the 28th, 29th, and 30th of July in some microscopical operations beyond Chaman. These operations were successfully conducted, and a trooper of the Poona Horse was killed, while several shots were fired at the enemy in return. There were one or two rather long marches, during which some of the men suffered from fatigue and some from thirst. It was just like war, though on an exceedingly minute scale. Major Jacob was the Commander-in-Chief, and Mr. D'Aguilar was his "brilliant staff." The humour of the situa-

tion was thoroughly appreciated by Major Jacob, who, on completing his campaign, at once adressed to the Staff Officer at Chaman a despatch full of the happiest touches of satire. He recounts every circumstance with the most amusing detail, commends the conduct of some of his men, who discharged their guns without accident, expresses his obligations to Majors Westmacott and Wace and Lieutenant Winter, who gave his party a drink of water, and finally concludes with a sentence that the eminent "Bobs" will confess to be conceived in his own happiest style. "Throughout this long march of seventeen miles Lieutenant D'Aguilar, R. E., was indefatigable in the assistance he gave me."

* * *

PERHAPS a joke never met with more eminent success than this of Major Jacob's. The despatch was taken quite seriously, and forwarded to General Phayre, who presumably having no time to read through Major Jacob's *jeu d'esprit,* but seeing that it did not refer to a second Khushk-i-Nakhud, and anxious to contribute the humblest mite towards the vindication of the Bombay army, passed it on,

with hasty expressions of approval, to the Commander-in-Chief, who handed it up, through the Adjutant-General, to the Governor.

***

THE Governor sent it on to Simla, and the matter now becomes serious. A military movement of the minutest dimensions and the minutest importance, humorously described, goes flaunting about in *Gazettes* as a counterpoise to the disaster at Khushk-i- Nakhud, and a justification of the efficiency of Bombay Officers and Bombay Troops. The Bombay Army, and all who know it, and know its worth, may feel justly aggrieved.

***

So Roberts has thrashed Ayoub Khan! I must say I feel sorry that General Phayre did not push on without waiting for the Bengal troops, and, in combination with Primrose, retrieve the Khusk-i-Nakhud defeat. Every reader of the *Bombay Gazette* will regret this. But what must General Primrose feel! The *Pioneer* will now say—"Bombay is my washpot; over Burrows will I cast out my shoe; over Primrose will I triumph. Who will lead us into

the strong city? Who will lead us into Kandahar?" Chorus:—"Bobs shall tread down our enemies."

* * *

THE accounts of the unspeakable Lord's arrival in England will fill his enemies with joy. How he must have cursed the claque for their officiousness in coming publicly forward to meet him, putting him to an open shame! —But toad-eating must have its reward: and the English papers say that the Earl shook hands with them.

* * *

ASKING the Marquis of Hartington questions about Khusk-i-Nakhud has proved a barren pastime: and the extent to which it has been indulged in only shows what a spiritless and idle world we live in. The Marquis is, ex-officio, the most ignorant man in regard to India who has a seat in the Cabinet. The Buddhas of his Council have outgrown that period in life when information possesses any interest or value. They only care for opinions. When the Minister asks for information about Kandahar a confused cackle arises about Rent, Education, Archæology, Roman-

Urdu, Artillery Majors, Central Asia, and Experimental Farms.

* * *

General Brooke, Major Shewell, and Mr. Gordon lost their lives in attempting to succour the wounded. The two former, if they had lived, would have fairly earned the Victora Cross ; and it is to be hoped that the *Gazette*, which announces their deaths, will place upon record the glorious circumstances under which they fell.

* * *

The irony of events was never more conspicuously exhibited than in the proposal of the Famine Commission to establish a Department of Agriculture. Lord Lytton and Sir John Strachey suppressed the Department of Agriculture created by Lord Mayo, and formed the Famine Commission in its stead. Now the Famine Commissioners, like unnatural children, turn upon their parents and rend them for the act of generation.

* * *

This F. C. Report reminds one of the book in which Mr. Val. Prinsep ridiculed the Delhi Assemblage he was engaged to paint and glorify.

No. XXVII.

(*September* 9, 1880.)

AN Italian comic journal has a cartoon of General Roberts entering Kabul with a bag of money in one hand and a drawn sword in the other. For this and the numerous allusions in the home papers to the expenditure of Rs. 1,50,000 a month on "the Political Department" at Kabul, General Roberts has to thank Mr. Lepel Griffin, who was just a little too eager to prove that it was not his policy to buy up the Chiefs.

***

A WELL-KNOWN correspondent of one of your contemporaries, who writes very pleasant gossiping letters from London, says that *except in the "St. James's Gazette"* you will not find at this dull season, in the London papers, clean-cut articles written with any sustained purpose. The well-known correspondent was one of the earliest and most

valued of Mr. Greenwood's supporters on the *Pall Mall*; and now marches under the new banner. We thus enter into the secret chambers of his argument.

***

In the *World* of August 4th 'Atlas' makes a furious attack upon the careless editing of the *Times*, illustrating his remarks by choice specimens of the Arabian's blundering. But not only does the Arabian blunder: he rallies round him other blunderers. I have just been reading in the *Times*, of August 13th, a contribution from "our Edinburgh correspondent" entitled "the Land of Scott," in which Ashestiel is not only repeatedly spelled Ashiestiel, but is spoken of as the birth-place of *The Lay*. Now *The Lay* was only finished here. The first canto was written in 1802, two years before Scott "flitted" to Ashestiel.

***

A CORRESPONDENT of the *World* associates the names of Lord Chelmsford and Captain Carey with "the three field officers and five doctors who were the first to reach Kandahar from the field of Khushk-i-Nakhud." The medical profession, the writer adds, "should

specially set its mark of approbation on those five active brethren."

* * *

To prevent more of this sort of thing being written, the field officers and doctors in question would do well to demand the verdict of a Court of Enquiry.

* * *

MR. ADAM, the new Governor of Madras, is said to be descended from "the grand old gardener and his wife;" and thus in point of birth, to be quite the equal of the double-barrelled Duke. When an Indian appointment was first suggested to him he expressed a hope that he would be stationed somewhere near the Eden Gardens, as he was a *Para-desi Adami*, sprung from our first parents; and having about him that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin, though perhaps less of the old Adam than even the Duke.

When Adam delved and Eve span
Where was then the Bucking man!

* * *

SIR ASHLEY EDEN assures me that he is not the writer of an article that lately appeared in the *Pioneer* on the subject of Mr. Buck, Direc-

tor of Agriculture. He evidently suspects Mr. Wright. This is as it ought to be. One should keep green the memory of the man one officiates for. If Mr. Buckland had done this, the Historian of the world would not now be wandering an unplaced spirit on the shores of pension. But I fear that Mr. Buckland, when in charge of the Calcutta Zoo, too often gave to the monkeys what was meant for mankind; like Mr. Darwin,—who used to feed his gorillas on pie-crust.

***

It would be interesting to know who Sir George Couper's friend is in the *Civil and Military Gazette*. Sir George fixes an angry eye on the Royal Engineers; for Sir George is not an Armadillo. Herein lies an allegory (not an alligator; but a hog in armour.)

***

The *Daily Telegraph* is always contributing something to the English language. It has now formed from the adjective commonplace, the abstract noun commonplacency! This is done quite seriously, in an account of a diamond robbery. "No deception," says the *Daily Telegraph*, turning up his sleeves, "we

do these things in the ordinary course of business." It amazes me how the sweetness-and-light family can stand these philological outrages.

* * *

I HAVE been reading the Central Asia Blue Book (No. I., 1880). It has a curious extract from the *St. Petersburg Gazette* pointing out the advantages that Russia may derive from offering sanctuary to political refugees from Kabul:—"The certainty of finding an asylum from the persecution of enemies is a very important consideration in the minds of Asiatics; and it is our interest to increase, as far as possible, in Asia that confidence in ample Russian protection." Here, then, is a place of retirement for Ayoub Khan. He may forget the banks of the Helmund by the pleasant waters of the Zerapshan.

* * *

A LETTER from a native agent, dated Herat, January 19th, 1879, is interesting:—"The troops at Herat now consist of 17 infantry regiments (14 Kabuli and 3 Herati). Each regiment consists of 700 men, 100 of whom are musicians, &c. There are also two thousand

horse ; but they are so badly off that they cannot be sent anywhere if they are wanted. There are 82 pieces of ordnance." Of these 18 are described as "Horse-Artillery guns," 12 as belonging to mule batteries, and 6 breech-loaders.

* * *

In a letter dated Teheran, September 21st, 1879, the following passage occurs :—"It is reported from Herat that the troops are under no control ; and that Ayoub Khan is so weak a Governor that Herat is like a town without any Government at all."

* * *

Then there is a telegram from Mr. Thomson to Lord Salisbury, dated Teheran, November 30th, 1879 :—"I have received a telegram from the Mashed Agent, stating, but without giving his authority, that Ayoub Khan has prepared 10,000 troops, and intends marching to attack Khandahar ; and that for this purpose he is levying a forced contribution from the inhabitants."

* * *

We surely had timely warning of Ayoub's

coming. To think that after knowing all this a British Brigade should be found sleeping on its form right in the middle of the Afghan's path, fills one with dismay. Is the Political Agent played out? Are things what they seem, or are visions about?

* * *

"For ways that are dark
And for tricks that are vain
The Afghan Sirdar is peculiar,
And the same I beg leave to maintain."

This is what Colonel St. John replies.

No. XXVIII.

(*September* 17, 1880.)

General Phayre's Brigades are now to be withdrawn. It would be interesting to know what their advance cost; and what the great Cocked-hats thought they were going to do. It is well known that the great Cocked-hats calculated they would arrive in the neighourhood of Kandahar before Roberts's force; but this does not account for their being ordered to take up cold-weather clothing and to make arrangements for a campaign of six months.

* * *

Apparently the great Cocked-hats thought that Generals Roberts and Phayre and all this mob of Brigadiers would be able to extract a series of military movements out of Ayoub Khan's Army; they calculated that, according to the most advanced principles of British warfare, our troops would commence the cam-

paign by getting beaten. They never dreamt that Roberts would squander so fine an enemy in a single battle.

***

If instead of gathering together cavalry regiments from the four quarters of Heaven, General Phayre had been directed to provide transport at Sibi and provisions further on for such troops as were immediately available, he and his Political Agents might now be tearing the carcase with Roberts at Kandahar.

***

As it was, the regiments from Meerut, Mooltan, and Madras, on arriving at Sibi, received no assistance from General Phayre beyond an order to advance. There was absolutely no transport; and the consequence was that a good deal of imperial baggage had to be abandoned on the road, to enrich the Marri clan. These troops, disappointed of their fun at Kandahar, have now to make the best of their way back through an impoverished country, probably obliged to hold regimental famines on the march.

***

Very possibly it was not General Phayre's

fault that there was no transport at Sibi. But while Government was smiling and pressing on him more cavalry regiments, he might have reported that he had no means of sending them on to the front. Then perhaps a clement Government would have vouchsafed him byles.

* * *

Two thousand pack-byles would have helped him to get on to Kandahar, much more effectively than two thousand horse from the North-Western Provinces and Madras.

* * *

THE next time we advance on Kandahar, General Phayre will remember the advantages of pack-bullocks (not wild cattle distrained from the surrounding villages, with their tails in the air) over English, Bengal, and Madras Cavalry. The English, Bengal, and Madras Cavalry will also remember General Phayre, and will look for bullock transports of fighting and glory in other fields.

* * *

THE usual inanities of the Queen's speech are enlivened this time by some flashes of grim humour. Khushk-i-Nakhud is playfully alluded to as "the resumption of hostilities under

Ayoub Khan, which has necessitated further military operations in Southern Afghanistan."

* * *

THE misery and anarchy at present prevailing in Ireland cause Her Majesty "to dwell with especial pleasure upon the probable improvement in the condition of the people of Ireland."

* * *

THE Bogus Budgeteers, however, are happily excluded from the smiling pale of hopes and courtesies. Their iniquities are sternly alluded to as—"The recent miscarriage in presenting the accounts of the Afghan war expenses.

* * *

THE speech is quite equal to its predecessors in looseness of construction, verging dangerously on bad grammar. Thankfulness is expressed for "several weeks of fine weather which have secured a good harvest, *and which is reasonably abundant in some parts.*" Fine weather being "reasonably abundant" is surely a new thought somewhat surprisingly expressed. "Dean's English is better than this."

* * *

AT last they are beginning to mop up the

financial mess which the Bogus Budgeteers have been busy making for the past three years. No one outside the Ring will be sorry to hear that Sir Edwin Johnson's services have been dispensed with : and all eyes will be now turned towards the three remaining delinquents. But it is almost certain that only Strachey will go.

* * *

When it is said that Sir Edwin Johnson has incurred the censure of Government in connection with the failure of the war estimates, this means that Sir Edwin Johnson and the three other Bogus Budgeteers, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Ministers, lent themselves to Lord Lytton's attempt to underestimate, and so misrepresent, the cost of the Afghan war in view of an approaching election struggle between the Whigs and Tories. In fact, this is precisely what Lord Hartington implied when he said that Sir John Strachey was "determined" to furnish low estimates.

* * *

This is quite the gravest charge that has been brought against any member of the Government of India since the Company's

authority was handed over to the Crown. It verges very closely upon a charge of deliberate dishonesty. I do not for a moment venture to pronounce an opinion regarding the truth, or falseness of the charge; I only try to show what it amounts to. No one will grudge General Roberts the Grand Cross of the Bath. He has marched well and fought gallantly on two very memorable occasions, and, though not a great strategist, he is a smart and vigorous commander. In the Duke of Wellington's time he would probably have earned a clasp, which was not worth much more in those days than the G. C. B. is now. Sir Frederick Haines is a Grand Commander of the Bath.

***

BUT many people believed that General Roberts would be made a Baronet, if not a Peer. Nor was this a very unreasonable expectation. Even Lord Lytton was both a Baronet and a Peer.

***

I THINK Sir Frederick Roberts deserved more than Sir Donald Stewart, as he occupied the most responsible and conspicuous place in Afghanistan for a longer period, and experienced

in a greater degree the anxieties, hardships, and perils of the war. Yet all must feel that General Stewart will worthily wear the Grand Cross of the Bath. He is like a British General of the old type, brave, confident, and modest, careful to do his duty and indifferent to its consequences.

***

A VERY foolish paragraph has been circulating in the papers about a conference at Simla to be attended by political agents, and "political officers in charge of *assigned states*." This latter phrase is pure nonsense, for when territories are assigned they are no longer states. The writer was probably thinking of the Berars and Sir Richard Meade, but unwilling to commit himself to names.

***

THE paragraph seems to imply, moreover, that at this conference some mysterious change in reference to our relations with the protected principalities will be discussed. This, too, is moonshine.

***

BUT it is not unreasonable to suppose that the

opinions of political officers may be taken in regard to the new frontier on the north-west, and that many subjects relating to Central India and Hyderabad will be discussed in view of the retirement of Sir Henry Daly and Sir Richard Meade.

* * *

THE question who is to succeed these officers is one of interest to at least two people. It is, for instance, a question of interest to Mr. Lepel Griffin, who will certainly be sent either to Hyderabad or Indore.

No. XXIX.

(*September* 23, 1880.)

THE Afghan war furnishes many new illustrations of the demoralising effect of rifles that can be quickly loaded. In proportion as men are able to load quickly do they depreciate the importance of taking aim. An Afghan who spends a fortnight in charging his flintlock is very careful how he lets it off. He won't even fire into the "brown" of a regiment: he marks down his man. But the British soldier will hardly deign to raise his rifle to his shoulder. He thinks there is salvation in rapid reloading and in making a noise. The closer the enemy presses on him, the more wildly does he fire into the air. The loss sustained by the enemy in all our recent battles is quite ludicrously disproportionate to the ammunition expended. In some cases it took about ten thousand rounds of ball cartridge to kill one Afghan.

* * *

Bows and arrows, properly constructed and

employed, would have been infinitely more effective. When the French cavalry, clad in mail, charged the English at the commencement of the battle of Agincourt, they were simply mown down by King Harry's bowmen. It was computed that four-fifths fell in this first onset, pierced with English arrows.

***

Our field-guns made fairly good practice; but even the artillery arm is somewhat debauched with rapid firing. Sully, who was present with the King's artillery at the battle of Coutras, (1587), writes as follows :—"The battle had already begun before our artillery, which consisted only of three pieces of cannon, was fixed; and we soon had occasion for it. The Catholics cried out 'Victory,' and indeed they wanted but little of being victorious; but at the same moment our artillery began to play, and so terrible was the fire that *every discharge carried away twelve, fifteen, and sometimes twenty-five men.* It put a stop immediately to the impetuosity of the enemy, and reduced them to such an extremity that seeking to avoid the fire they dispersed and offered only a disorderly and ill-sustained re-

sistance to the efforts of the King of Navarre." Think of this: with three guns and nearly three hundred years ago!

* * *

WHY is it that light calthrops (or crows'-feet) are never used now? A few dropped judiciously during a retreat would soon check pursuing cavalry and give the retreating force time to re-form. There is nothing barbarous in staking the hoofs of a few horses to save an army. No pity is spared for charges torn with shot and shell.

* * *

I HAVE just been reading some books on spiritualism, and have come to the conclusion that, enclosed within a very thick shell of juggling and imposture, there lies hidden a kernel of fact, only referable to some law of nature with which science is unacquainted. The experiments made by Mr. Crookes, F. R. S., under severe test conditions in presence of two other fellows of the Royal Society and of Lords Dunraven and Lindsay, proved that Mr. Home, the celebrated medium, could exert a power over matter which dynamics cannot account for. The experiments were made in

Mr. Crookes' laboratory with delicate instruments constructed by himself, and in broad daylight. There was no manner of concealment; the closest scrutiny was invited; and eminent unbelievers were asked to come and apply their own tests. Mr. Crookes' *Phenomena of Spiritualism*, reprinted from the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, and published by Burns, Southampton Row, Holborn, gives a lucid and interesting account of these experiments; and it is well worth reading.

***

Together with this book I received some others and a newspaper treating of the same subject, but in a most ludicrous vein of dogmatism. They proclaim their own quackery in a hundred ways; but especially by their absurd jargon, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Crookes says:—"The pseudo-scientific spiritualist professes to know everything: no calculations trouble his serenity, no hard experiments, no long laborious readings. He talks glibly of all sciences and arts, overwhelming the enquirer with terms like 'electro-biologize, psychologize, animal magnetism,' &c.; showing ignorance rather than under-

standing. The real workers of science must be extremely careful not to allow the reins to get into unfit and incompetent hands."

***

THIS is certainly "the mark of the Beast." The imposter pretends to teach where only enquiry is permissible; and he is blatant with the gibberish and hocus-pocus of the swindler and the mounte-bank.

***

THE account of Mr. Crookes' adventures with the delightful spirit "Katie" is calculated to popularise spiritualism.

***

"SHE took my arm when walking; and the impression conveyed to my mind was that it was a living woman by my side. I asked her permission to clasp her in my arms so as to be able to verify this interesting impression. Permission was graciously given and I accordingly did—well, as any gentleman would do under the circumstances." Mr. Crooks adds that she did not "struggle:" this in a tone of disappointment. But it was perhaps as well that she did not "struggle;" for she had the unusual faculty, we are told, of adding a

cubit to her stature; whereas Mr. Crookes is short and presumbly inextensile. "Katie's neck was bare and she was robed in flowing white drapery." I daresay some of your readers would like to keep a few such spirits in a bottle.

* * *

Mr. Crookes photographed Katie:—"But photography is as inadequate to depict the perfect beauty of Katie's face, as words are powerless to describe her charms of manner."

* * *

A book, entitled, "Where are the Dead?" (Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.) tells us a good deal more about Katie. She was interviewed on one occasion by the Commissioner of the *Daily Telegraph* who was treated by her with much confidence,—"after first putting to me the pertinent question—'Do you squeeze?'"

* * *

"Do you bunch?"—was a question asked of Mr. Hepworth Dixon when collecting materials for his *Spiritual Wives*.

* * *

Those who care to know what the scientific

world thought of Mr. Crookes's spiritualistic investigations cannot do better than read the attack made upon them by Dr. Carpenter in the *Quarterly Review* for October, 1871; and followed up, after an interval of nearly six years, in the 2nd number of the *Nineteenth Century* under the misleading title of *The Radiometer and its Lessons*. To the latter article Mr. Crookes replied in the *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1877, in an article headed, *Another Lesson from the Radiometer*. In this he goes for Dr. Carpenter and makes an example of him; trampling on his fallen head, and carrying away his scalp.

* * *

THE troops are beginning to be withdrawn from Kandahar. Is Kandahar then to be given up? It is the only trophy of this disastrous and costly war. The moment we give it up, a note of triumph will be sounded throughout Islam. While we hold it, the people of Afghanistan will feel that, so far, their resistance to our arms has been futile; and what is more important, the people of India will understand that we have not been altogether beaten. If we give up a

great place with a name in history like Kandahar, it will be useless to point to a rectified frontier as the fruit of the war. Asiatics seldom apply a microscope to politics; nor do they use large maps.

* * *

I THOUGHT that with the disappearance of the smiling Lord we had happily seen the last of Imperial theatricals for some time, but now it seems that Lord Ripon is to hold a big durbar at Lahore.

* * *

THESE durbars are simply detested by the Chiefs; and they afford the Chiefs and the Viceroy no opportunity of becoming really acquainted with each other.

* * *

ALWAYS mismanaged, they are a fertile source of jealousies and grievances; and they encourage the Chiefs to waste their revenues on cloth-of-gold and toy-soldiers. That they should be mismanaged is inevitable, because their management and the accompanying "honours" are a perquisite of the Secretariat people, who only know a native of India when they see him on paper.

No. XXX.

(*November* 11, 1880.)

WHY keep England? With all the latest Simla improvements in Government England is only an incubus. The Bogus Elastica, the Podophylline Transport Aperient for constipated treasuries, and the Papyrostrategic Stylograph for the creation of military history render the control of the India Office not only unnecessary, but ridiculous. Before the smartest Secretary of State can compose a telegram a leak may be sprung in every treasury in India: before Sir Henry Rawlinson has time to point out Afghanistan on the large maps purchased in Lord Salisbury's reign a complete campaign may have been fought on paper, quite detailed, precise, and staccato, with chaplains, doctors, an enemy on remote hills, and striking displays of coolness, judgment, and timely daring. Beyond auditing the administration, the only other purpose which England subserves is to supply functionaries, troops,

money, and newspaper criticism. A commission might easily be appointed to consider the best means of providing a substitute for these imports.

* * *

THEOSOPHY is just the religion for Simla—a mild after-dinner kind of religion, accompanied by a flicker of manifestations. It amazes me that its clever and enterprising apostles have not effected the conversion of the entire Simla community *en block*. There was nothing to displace. They had virgin soil to cultivate. "An evil generation seeketh after a sign," and it is at once given to them in the epiphany of a cigarette and a tea-cup.

* * *

WHEN we reflect upon its adventures during the past twelve months it becomes a serious question whether it is wise or safe to leave so impulsive a creature as the Government of India alone on these remote hills for half the year. Colonel Chesney says that the overworked merchants and bankers form no public opinion competent to brace the constitution of the listless, enervated, dyspeptic hypochondriacs (as the disappointed groundlings picture

them) who play at governing India (to use the *Statesman's* phraseology). This is very true: but then there are the Baboos. Secretaries would hesitate to adopt a system of third-class thimble-rigging as their creed, as the embodiment of their highest spiritual aspirations, in presence of a vast community of Bengalee Baboos prepared to trample on all religious prejudice with their patent-leather shoes.

* * *

I AM naturally gratified to learn that my proposal to establish an Anglo-Indian station in England has been seriously received in Bath and Brompton, and promises to be carried into effect. A piece of land is to be purchased near Ealing and laid out under the directions of a committee of generals drawing colonels' allowances, and pensioned lieutenant-governors. Roads made of dust, large recreation grounds planted with straw, avenues of trees enclosed in wooden cages, mud bungalows white-washed with skimmed milk, and a company's garden with a well and a *chabutra* for the band are spoken of in the programme. A burra Mem Sahib will be imported red-hot from India, together with mosquitoes, snakes, and a

mutton-club. The burra-khana system of social enjoyment, and lawn-tennis parties in the dusk of the evening will help to animate and gild the scene. Solah topees, white umbrellas, and canvas shoes will, of course, be *de rigueur*.

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I HEAR from Herat that Ayoub Khan's ambition is now to beat a Bengal general; and he feels confident that he will be able to do this if he can only secure for the Bengal general a staff of Bombay correspondents.

***

LORD RIPON'S tour among the tigers of the Terai will prepare the minds of the chiefs at Lahore for his reception. This tiger-shooting will render him intelligible to them. It will stand him in better stead than a fine-spun web of gossamer sentences sparkling with the dews of fancy and kerosine.

***

IT is pleasing to picture the dismay which must be felt at St. Petersburgh on reading Mr. Adam's forecast of a policy for Madras—direct relations with Russia. If we could now get the Chief Commissioner of British Burmah

and the King of Johore to take our part with the new Governor of Madras against Russia, the Eastern question might be solved. We could simply intimidate Russia; trample on her fallen head, singing jingo songs, and reading mainfestoes about our attitude.

* * *

THE impending scarcity in the North-West will afford the public an opportunity of testing the value of the report published by the Famine Commission. District officers will now, if the report is of any value commensurate with its cost, be able, in the light of its suggestions, to checkmate the famine by new and unexpected moves.

* * *

THIS report is probably the most costly publication which Asia has yet produced. It is believed to have let out a stream of imperial silver amounting to sixty or seventy thousand pounds sterling. The original cost of publishing the entire works of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Adam Smith, Bentham, Ricardo, McCulloch, Mill, and Senior was a drop in the ocean to this. We may add the expenses of a party of Cook's tourists in their wanderings throughout

Europe, without coming in sight of these vast figures.

* * *

But this money will have been well spent if it really furnishes us with the means of solving the various problems that arise out of famine; if it really is the ultimate consensus of opinion arrived at by those who had the best opportunities of studying the questions it deals with. But if it is the uncertain shout of a divided faction of doctrinaires, the money might have been sunk to greater advantage in the quagmire of trans-frontier politics.

* * *

At one time there was some talk of sending the 17th Lancers to Kandahar. This regiment is stationed at Mhow, in Central India, and is the only English cavalry regiment under the Bombay Commander-in-Chief. It came out to India direct from Zululand, red-handed from the glories of Ulundi; and no one can doubt but that its presence at Maiwand might have gone far to turn the fortunes of that terrible day. It is well, however, to place on record, for the comfort of those who may have regretted its enforced inactivity at Mhow, that

its present equipment quite precludes the possibility of its going on active service. It has no saddles! The howdahs which have been handed down from generation to generation at Mhow are not even supplied with lance-rests, and are in every respect impracticable for horses as now designed (under sealed pattern) by Province.

* * *

An English paper predicts for Sir Frederick Roberts G. C. B. the glories of the C.S.I.; a Bombay paper which shall be nameless suffixes the letters C. S. I. to the familiar name of the President of the Council; and Colonel George Chesney, whose brilliant career should have earned for him long ago the Bath, is promised by the press at home the motto "Heaven's Light our Guide!" These are amiable vagaries of fancy. It is, however, more difficult to account for the honours paid to the Governor of Madras by an ingenious and amusing correspondent whose anecdotes and witticisms enliven the columns of a contemporary of yours. This correspondent's judges, councillors, adjutant-generals, and collectors, instead of addressing the Governor as "Duke,"

employ the term "your Grace," which—without affecting any undue familiarity with the Peerage—one may safely say is not employed by English gentlemen in their private intercourse with Dukes in England.

* * *

I AM told that you are going to have a pony or bath-chair railway from Narel to Matheran. Put me down for all the twenty-five per cent. debentures you know of. I once had a passion for speculation; and a gambling flicker still survives, in spite of all my losses in the Umballa Derby Sweep.

No. XXXI.

(*December* 10, 1880.)

THE arrival of Lady Ripon and Lord de Grey has engaged widespread interest and sympathy. The Viceroy is so English, so simple, and so unaffected that we can recognise in him our common humanity. He is intelligible to us; we can think of him in our own language. He acts and speaks with a homely dignity and with sobriety. His words seem to be prompted by a heart that beats in the old familiar measures of patriotism, piety, and week-day righteousness. They are luminous with good sense, not occult with cleverness. The home life and the public life of such a man are blended together in one harmonious whole that is exemplary and instructive, and worthy to reflect the authority and influence, social as well as political, of our beloved and blameless Queen.

* * *

IT is just conceivable that even Simla will

sober down under the gentle enchantment of a good example in high places. Yet I have grave doubts. I seem to hear the voice of Comus protesting:—"Come, no more; this is mere moral babble and direct against the canon laws of our foundation. 'Tis but the lees and settlings of a melancholy blood."

* * *

Lord de Grey is a famous battue shot. He has probably destroyed more domestic pheasants than any living man of his years. He is said to shine in the constellation of domestic-pheasant destroyers with a brilliancy equal to that of Lords Walsingham and Leicester, and hardly less than that of Dhulip Singh, Maharaja, Squire, and Poulterer. For much curious information under this head I would refer your readers to a sketch of the Sikh Chief in a recent number of the *World*.

* * *

Lord de Grey will now have an opportunity in the Nepal Terai of rising to a higher level of sport and shooting something wild—a tiger or a jungle fowl.

* * *

So Mr. Caird has finally exploded! The

India Office seems to have given him *carte blanche* to write on any subject that occurred to his versatile and capricious mind, and to print what he wrote at the expense of the Indian ryot in the authoritative form of a Blue-book. The disastrous result is that instead of writing instructively on manure and subsoil drainage, he has written ridiculously on Indian polity, and has accordingly gone off with a bang. He will be heard of in India no more, save as the subject of after-dinner anecdote and laughter; but the embarrassed, modest, diffident Government of India remains ready to invite some new Œdipus to read the riddles of empire. It is not likely that a gentleman farmer will be selected for this task again; there are many other types of omniscience equally available, such as the village doctor, the fledgling curate, the Oxford don, the man about town, and the P. and O. captain.

* * *

I AM told that the Deputy-Assistant-Army-Tailor-General at the Horse Guards has put forward a new scheme of reform, which is gradually finding favour with His Royal

Highness the Cocked-Hat-in-Chief. Hitherto the crown and star that indicate an officer's rank have been worn on the collar, much to the detriment of military discipline and the general efficiency of the army; henceforth these distinguishing badges will be worn on the shoulder-strap, and will thus be—especially in the case of mounted officers—hidden from sight. This is, no doubt, a step in the right direction. When the public mind is prepared for the full measure of reform the star and crown, either in conjunction or separately, will be worn on the seat of the overalls.

* * *

Such changes in uniform, while diverting the surplus pay of military men into one of the regulation channels, keep the British army abreast of continental reorganisation, and tend to give the people of England confidence in their army, even when maintained on a peace footing. Such changes, moreover, give us the exact measure of the Horse Guards intellect and capacity.

* * *

The Bombay military authorities, far from

being able to keep up with these giddy changes, seem to be altogether wanting in that fine tailoring instinct which fits the British general for high command. The only English cavalry regiment under the Bombay Commander-in-Chief is one that has always been conspicuous for the perfection of its equipment down to the most microscopical details, and which, from its chin-straps to its spur-boxes, has every item of dress *sui generis*; even the white pocket-handkerchief worn over the forage cap is believed to have been designed by Colonel Gonne. Conceive the tumult of indignation in the bosom of the 17th Lancers when it is proposed by the Bombay Horse Marine Guards to supply the whole regiment with cast-off artillery greatcoats having all the buffoonery of ordnance emblems stamped on their buttons!—"Rather let us perish of cold in our own skulls and cross-bones, said the 17th Lancers with one voice: "these greatcoats may be stamped with the motto *Ubique*, but they shall not come to

* * *

It is now generally believed that Kandahar

is to be immediately abandoned to prove to the world that the war in Afghanistan had no political object, beyond winning public attention and popularity for Lords Beaconsfield and Lytton. The end of these wretched campaigns would be quite ludicrous, if it were not so melancholy. War was made with the ostensible purpose of opening up diplomatic intercourse with Kabul ; and now after all these millions have been spent, and all this blood has been shed, Government actually does not know whether the new Amir of Kabul is dead or alive, whether he is reigning in peace and magnificence, or whether he has been hounded out of the country. The only thing really known about Kabul is this, that we have happily furnished it with fortifications, which will preclude the possibility of our ever returning to play hide-and-seek with Mahomed Jan in the Bala Hissar and Sherpur. A few European officers—say, Russians—could now hold Kabul against the world.

* * *

We should, therefore, have grand durbars at Lahore and other places to draw the attention of the chiefs and people of India to what has

been accomplished in Afganistan;—it is very meet and right so to do.

* * *

It seems to me that the most curious trophy of the war is the Wali Sher Ali of Kandahar, who is now packing his portmanteau, and directing his letters to be addressed to Mussourie or Simla. He was created by the Foreign Office, and was intended to be an avatar of the Wali St. John. When he leaves Kandahar no one will sing—"Oh Wullie, we have missed you!"

* * *

When one thinks of the splash that Lord Lytton made in Asia is it not a little surprising that he should have gone so quietly to the bottom in Europe!

* * *

It is quite a mistake to suppose that General Phayre is not going to get the bronze star and clasp. He is to get it; and the only difference will be that Roberts's clasp will be inscribed with the word *Kandahar*, while Phayre's will bear the legend *Quetta*; and Robert's star will have a Pegasus engraved upon it, while

Phayre's will be distinguished by a restive pack-bullock.

***

THE only occasion on which we hear of Satan interfering with the Jews was when he stood up against Israel and provoked David to number the people. The Census Commissioner was Joab: with us it is Mr. Elliott. It is not necessary to pursue the parallel farther, beyond expressing a hope that the numbering may not be followed by any of the consequences offered for David's choice by God. Yet it seems an ill omen that, in the person of Mr. Elliott, famine and census-taking should be so closely associated. Many people will reflect with comfort on the absence of Sir Richard at this conjuncture. Recollections of Sholapur and Tirhut might have been revived with such vividness as to hurry him along once more into his old courses.

***

THE Duke of Buckingham bequeaths to Madras and to his successor several members of his staff. The Rumpa rebellion will go, it is believed, to a favourite Collector, and the remaining personality will be dispersed in small legacies, or by sale. Nothing will then be

left of the Duke in Madras but the odour of sanctity and the reputation of an eminently unsuccessful Governor.

***

But ours is the age of unsuccessful functionaries in this country. The Government of India is still struggling to purge itself of unsuccessful members that entered its system in the late administration.

No. XXXII.

(*December* 18, 1880.)

THE British public has not a retentive memory. While Sir Frederick Roberts is being feasted and toasted for his march from Kabul to Kandahar and culminating victory, no one remembers the capture of the Bala Hissar by Mahomed Jan, and the siege of Sherpur: still less can anyone recollect the executions at Kabul, which once excited so much newspaper fury and indignation. A man is judged by his most recent actions. If General Burrows had sallied out of Kandahar at the last moment with a fresh brigade and thrashed Ayoub Khan, Maiwand would be by this time forgotten, and General Roberts would be a second-class Bengal lion, not a first-class European lion.

* * *

FOR the moment Roberts eclipses Sir Garnet

Wolseley. People say in a whisper that perhaps we have two generals after all, as marching and despatch-writing in Afghanistan are almost as dangerous and difficult as hunting down obscure negro tribes in the forests of Ashantee, or on the grass prairies of Zulu land.

* * *

THE *World* has some very sarcastic remarks on Anglo-Indian celebrities in general and Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Richard Temple in particular. This paper has the effrontery to say that, although these ex-Governors are very famous men on the Apollo Bunder, they are very small beer in Pall Mall. The idea of Sir Richard Temple not being a great and famous man is revolting to the well-ordered mind. Sir Richard has for many years made greatness his own particular rôle: he has played the part of the great man on the boards of the Finance and the Famine Theatres, besides being the great Chief Commissioner, the great Lieutenant-Governor, and the great Governor. To deny him the character of greatness so late in the day would be to unhinge all our opinions regarding him. The *World's* idea of greatness is dozing on the Treasury Bench with the seals

of office and a hundred thousand pounds a year in your trouser-pockets. It is akin to the oriental type of greatness—a gross thing encrusted with igneous crystals and blown out with sweetmeats and vanity.

* * *

NEXT month Upper India will be in communication with Bombay through Ajmir, Palanpur, and Baroda, and Allahabad and Calcutta will be for ever detached from the Punjab. Rajputana and the Punjab will be as outlying districts of Bombay. Frontier politics will naturally trickle into the Bombay papers, and Frontier Deputy Commissioners and Rajputana Chiefs into the Bombay shops. Yours will no longer be a nook-shotten isle, but a sceptr'd isle, a seat of Mars, a fortress built by Nature for herself (and the Municipal Commissioner), a little world, a precious stone set in the silver sea, and much more of this kind of thing.

* * *

THE distance between Lahore and Bombay will be hardly greater than the distance to be travelled between Lahore and Allahabad ; not to speak of the infinite advantages which Bom-

bay enjoys as a railway terminus over Allahabad,—the oysters, pomphlets, and steamers for England. It stands to reason that no one would go from Lahore to Allahabad, when he might go for the same money, and in the same time, from Lahore to Bombay, unless he happened to be a great Government official sacrificing his personal comfort to travelling allowances. The only hitch in this scheme of happiness for the Punjab is the fear that the Western Rajputana line will be so constipated with salt as to render passenger traffic impracticable. With reference to this danger, however, I have a proposal, which I offer with some diffidence, as, from its novelty, it may appear to some of your commercial readers to be jejune. I would suggest that the Sambhar Lake be supplied with fresh fish, so that the people of Jaipur may learn to consume their own salt. Government might have a monopoly of the fish,—but this is a detail which Sir John Strachey could easily work out in his Christmas holidays.

***

THE Agamemnon played in Greek at St. George's Hall divides the attention of London

with a new orang-outang at the Aquarium. For the former amusement Bohn's edition of the libretto is much in request. I am told that the breakdown danced at the close of the play by the son of Atreus, Ægisthus, Clytemnestra, and Cassandra is most unclassical, violating the severe majesty of the Greek tragedy.

* * *

SARAH BERNHARDT is studying the American language, and the Americans are studying Sarah Bernhardt. By the shadow of Death, they swear, she is a thunder-and-lightning-actress, reglar-slap-up hundred thousand-dollar-a moment-gal, calk'lated in every darnation walk of life and art to lick creation to fits,—bar yankeedoodledom. They have discovered her to be of American extraction, being connected through her step-mother with some of the best families in Boston, U. S.

* * *

THE *Pioneer* says that although Sir Dinkar Rao's followers are exempted from the Arms Act, they will not be permitted to carry on their persons cannon, fish-torpedoes, or war-rockets, and that they will not be allowed to fit up their

private houses as arsenals for the manufacture of arms of precision, 81-ton guns, steel gun-boats, &c. This seems a little hard on the khidmatgars and chuprassies of Sir Dinkar Rao. No wonder Mr. Gladstone was led to believe that such restrictions on the people of India in respect of bearing arms were sufficient to account for the depredations committed by tigers and wild animals in the streets of Rangoon and elsewhere. Sir Dinker Rao was formerly Minister of an important State, and was very nearly made a Political Agent once; his servants might then surely be trusted with Gatling guns and Woolwich infants. This limitation of their armament may well be cited as an instance of unnecessary and vexatious legislation.

* * *

I BELIEVE that small-game preservation in India is quite impracticable. The police will never be able to enforce any law passed. The variety of game in India is almost infinite, and it would be impossible to get the different close seasons into the brains of the rural constabulary. Besides, how are they to know what a man intends shooting? I know a

Director of Public Instruction who shot the elephant he was riding on when ostensibly out tiger-hunting. You will have the police at your heels, warning you that it is the close season for quail and hares when your thoughts are bent upon tigers and alligators. Every man seen out of his compound with a gun will be dogged by a policeman versed in the gestation of antelopes and the nidification of partridges. This sort of thing will, I fear, stimulate the diabolical cunning of the Anglo-Saxon. The unprincipled pot-hunter will go out crow and cock-robin shooting, till, reaching some secluded spot, he will speedily overwhelm the morals of the constable in attendance with small change, and proceed to destroy the protected game. Yet to restrict shooting will be comparatively easy; it is snaring that exterminates the game, and this is practised on an immense scale by all the poorer races, such as gujars, kanjars, and brinjaras, and can never be touched by the police.

***

But to preserve the poor beasts of the field and birds of the air during their breeding seasons was an amiable and beautiful impulse of

Mr. Lionel Ashburner's, and quite practicable enough for legislative purposes. You can make a capital law out of this kind of thing : it lends itself to schedules and preambles, and clauses and exceptions and illustrations. It has quite inflamed the imagination of the Poona Savarjanik Subha, and led them to write of rabbits and other animals not yet acclimatised. I quite expected to see Vernon Harcourt and Irish landlords in one of the schedules.

***

A WRITER in the *Asian* says that the native chiefs loathe the Political Department, that the very name of a Political Agent stinks in their nostrils. One reason assigned for this odour is that Politicals discourage racing in native territory. This strikes me as quite a new view of the Political. When I was a child I was always told that the Politicals were a pompous but inoffensive race, much loved by their tributary Rajahs, fond of innocent pastimes, and mildly addicted to horse-dealing. But I find that nearly everything has changed since I was a child.

***

DR. HUNTER says that nepotism is now im-

possible in India among the covenanted civilians,—or words to that effect. This is all very well for lectures in Edinburgh, but it will raise a shimmer of smiles in Bombay and Simla. A civilian, it is true, can no longer nominate a nephew, or the son of a boot-maker whose bill is in arrears, to an appointment in the Civil Service: once get his nephew or friend into the service, however, and he can show him a great many little kindnesses that are not dreamt of in Blue-books. How else can we account for the large family-parties ensconced in the warmest places of every Government in India!

No. XXXIII.

(*December* 25, 1880.)

A WELL-KNOWN Anglo-Indian, writing in the *Saturday Review* about Wigtonshire, contrasts the Arcadian happiness and quiet of that county with the scene of riot and bloodshed from which it is separated by the narrow waters of St. George's Channel! Ireland, geographically and politicaly, must be turned upside down in this writer's mind. Connemara and Antrim have changed places, and the North Channel and St. George's.

* * *

THE schedule of animals in the Game and Fish Preservation Bill exhibits a most curious medley of names and animals. Why does the word antelope occur, I should like to know? When General Warre very sensibly proposed that the words deer and antelope should be

substituted for the zoological and philological puzzle offered to the Council Mr. Ashburner replied that the word antelope would cover animals not contemplated by the Act. But the word antelope occurs in the schedule! And what are these animals to which the word is applicable that are not to be preserved? Then, again, consider the transliteration of the three words "neelghai," "chital," and "chinkaria"! Why should some animals in the schedule be spoken of in English and others in an unknown tongue? What is a "bekri," if not an antelope?

***

WHILE the Viceroy lies ill and the President of the Council is starring it in the provinces India is without a Supreme Government: the body politic is headless, the trunk stretched out supine under the palm-trees and monumental statues of Calcutta. Yet nobody seems to mind it very much: people go about smiling, as if Government were still firing off sheets of foolscap at them and cutting their pay.

***

SIR JAMES FERGUSSON is opening the floodgates of Upper India for a high tide of com-

merce that presses towards Bombay. The completion of the railway between Ajmir and Pahlanpur will gild your Bombay rupees, and place cotton-mills and American cocktails within the reach of the masses. What alarms me, however, is the thunder-cloud of cursing that must burst upon the narrow-gauge when it is found that the baby line is croupy with traffic. You will have to put on another Bishop for three or four years, I expect; and then much allowance will still have to be made for the infirmity of the human temper. Even angels will not sit quietly at way-side stations for five or six months waiting for a vacant seat, let alone fierce Panjabies and Bombay merchants, whose blood is heated with curry and the rays of a tropical sun.

* * *

Sir Donald Stewart becomes—or will become a little later on—Commander-in-Chief: and a seat in Council falls vacant. These events excite many hopes and fears in bosoms covered with scarlet broadcloth and gold-lace. A seat in Council is worth a good climate—all the year round and some seven thousand pounds a year, with a salute of fifteen guns; while the con-

comitant duties depend upon a man's opinionativeness, and need not be onerous. The adjutancy of a volunteer corps, or a garrison-instructorship, though not so well paid, is more exacting in its demands upon one's time. It is no wonder, then, that the news stirs the flickering pulse of so many old generals, and sets them spelling out appeals for recommendation to their friends in Allahabad and Calcutta. The eagerness thus displayed is usually trifled with by Government in a cruel way, by offering the appointment to a number of persons who are known to be unable or unwilling to accept it.

* * *

THE appointment of Sir Donald Stewart to the command of the army in India will be generally approved of. He is a tranquil, self-possessed old soldier, with much unostentatious ability and a chivalrous sense of honour. He will make himself trusted and respected throughout India. At Ahmed Kheyl he was by no means beaten in the end: and this was, perhaps, the greatest battle ever fought in Afghanistan. Everyone who was at Kabul when General Stewart arrived there speaks of the respectful awe which his presence inspired among the

sirdars and people. They honoured him as one who commanded fortune, and they feared him for the fewness of his words and the repose of his manners.

***

THE *Whitechapel Review* is running the *Daily Telegraph* very close in its acquaintance with matters oriental. It speaks of the new Government House in the mountains of Madras as "a small bungalow" that cost the fabulous sum of one lakh of rupees! And it promises Mr. Adam that in his splendid retreat he will be *lulled to sleep in punkahs, and fanned by decolletées Indian maidens in the sensuous garb of the East.* This is almost better than the *burra choop.*

***

MR. EASTWICK, who is preparing a Murray's Hand-book of the Bengal presidency, must find it no easy task to keep abreast of imperial progress. He has been engaged on this guide-book for at least six years. I know that six years ago he was busy with the chapters on Delhi and Agra. Since then great changes have swept over the face of the land, changes affecting the whole aspect of our administration, and changes

dislocating altogether the old system of communications: while in smaller matters, such as guide-books particularly deal with, everything is new. Prices, fares, travellers' bungalows, hotels, shops, and refreshment rooms have all been shaken up in the kaleidoscope. In respect of the minor incidents of travelling it is a new country since Mr. Eastwick's labours commenced, and in respect of the great objects for which people travel with guide-books the labours of men like W. W. Hunter, Birdwood, Burgess, Bühler, and Rajendra Lal Mitra, not to mention Mr. Caird, have greatly altered the character of what has to be studied and seen in India.

***

Captain Cole, R.E., a son of Sir Henry Cole, of South Kensington fame, has been appointed by the Government of India Curator of Ancient Monuments and Historical Remains, I believe. He is now on tour among his tombs, topes, and cave temples.

***

Endymion is a still more unreal and shadowy picture of men and manners than *Lothair*. Its portraits of the living and the dead are so

faint as to be hardly recognisable, while as pure creations of the imagination they cannot pretend to have any dramatic merit whatever. The incidents of the story are, when viewed together, incoherent ; and, when examined separately, improbable in the last degree. The Jewish glamour of gold that is shed over the entire fiction is in keeping with the literary style, which is lacquered and rococo, ostentatious and vulgar. The mode of life described is extravagantly voluptuous : the reflections to which it gives rise are paradoxical and spuriously epigrammatic. Such work is unworthy of the author of *Vivian Grey* and unworthy of the great parliamentary leader whose eloquence, whose knowledge of human character, and whose political strategy rekindled the spirit of the old Tory party and created modern Conservatism. But on the other hand, it is not unworthy of the *valet de chambre* who is said have composed *Lothair*, nor would it have been altogether unworthy of that imaginative lady who, in *Moths*, has imparted to the public her conceptions of the great and gay world.

***

THE chief interest connected with *Endymion*

centres in the extraordinary price which the author is said to have received for it, and in the large sale which has rewarded the enterprising publishers.

* * *

It cannot be very agreeable to grave and earnest statesmen who have been associated with Lord Beconsfield in high politics to see him cutting these ludicrous capers in literature, but it must be a matter of great rejoicing to his enemies. How Mr. Gladstone, from his high pedestal of grave polemics and Homeric criticism, must look down with contemptuous triumph on this puerile and foolish escapade !

* * *

If the Viceroy quite recovers from his fever, as we all sincerely hope he may, he will probably look back upon it in after-years with little regret. It has caused expression to be given to feelings of wide-spread and deep concern for his welfare and safety : it has brought to light the great popularity he has already achieved by his earnestness, his honesty, and his devotion to the responsible and arduous duties of his exalted station. The course of the fever has everywhere in India been watched

with real anxiety ; and the bulletins announcing his progress towards recovery will be read throughout the country with a sense of relief and gratitude. Far beyond the circles of bureaucratic sycophancy the news of Lord Ripon's recovery will be received with heartfelt thankfulness. Public opinion in Anglo-India has not yet been so debauched by Simla as to render it indifferent to qualities which Englishmen have ever honoured in their own country.

* * *

HAVE you ever read "Our Inheritance in the Great Pyramid," by Piazzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal for Scotland ? It is an attempt—not altogether unsuccessful, I think—to prove that the Great Pyramid is a storehouse of standard weights and measurements, and that it has likewise a great prophetic significance, as indicating by its internal passages and chambers, through inches convertible into years, the duration of the two "Dispensations,"—*viz.*, 1542 years for the Mosaic and 1881 years for the Christian. Forbid that I should talk lightly of these matters, or prevent subscribers to the *Bombay Gazette* from paying their forty-eight rupees for the coming year

in advance;—but on the eve of a Christmas that may be the last ever observed on this dear earth of ours I would quote for the benefit of your readers the last lines of Mother Shipton's Prophecy, which, if I remember rightly, first appeared in 1448 :—

"Fire and water shall wonders do ;
England at last shall admit a Jew.*
The world unto an end shall come
In eighteen hundred and eighty-one."

* *Endymion.*

No. XXXIV.

THE TEAPOT SERIES.

SOCIAL DISSECTION.

No. XXXIV.

SOCIAL DISSECTION.

(*January* 5, 1880.)

Gossip I.

My Dear Mrs. Smith,

I cannot understand why Mrs. Smith, with her absurd figure—for really I can apply no other adjective to it—should wear that most absurdly tight dress. Some one should tell her what a fright it makes of her. She is nothing but convexities. She looks exactly like an hour-glass, or a sodawater machine. At a little distance you can hardly tell whether she is coming to you, or going away from you. She looks just the same all round. People call her smile sweet; but then it is the mere sweetness of inanity. It is the blank brightness of an empty chamber. She sheds these smiles upon everyone and

everything, and they are felt to be cold like moonshine. Speaking for myself, these *eau-sucré* smiles could not suckle my love. I would languish upon them. My love demands stronger drink. Mrs. Smith's features are good, no doubt. Her eyes are good. An oculist would be satisfied with them. They have a cornea, a crystalline lens, a retina, and so on, and she can see with them. This is all very satisfactory, I do not deny, as far as it goes. Physiologically her eyes are admirable; but for poetry, for love, or even for flirting, they are useless. There is no significance in them, no witchery, no suggestiveness. The aurora of beautiful far away thoughts does not coruscate in them. Her eyelids conceal them, but do not quench them. They would be nothing for winking, or tears. If she winked at me, I should not jump into the air, as if shot in the spine, with my blood tingling to my extremities; my heart would not beat like a side-drum; my blushes would not come perspiring through my whiskers. Her winking would altogether mis-fire. Wy? Because her winking would be physiological and not erotic. If you ever

learnt to love her, it would not be for any love-light in her eye ; it would never be the quick, fierce, hot, biting electric passion of the fleshly poets, it would be what a chemist might call the "eremacausis" kindled by habit. Mrs. Smith's tears are quite the poorest product of the lachrymal glands I have ever seen. They are simply a form of water. They might dribble from an effete pump ; they might leak from a worn-out *mashq*. I observe them with pity and regret. Their drip has no echo in my bosom ; it produces no stalactites of sympathy in my heart.

I have often been told that her nose was good—and good it unquestionably is—good for blowing ; good for sneezing ; good for snoring ; good for smelling ; a fine nose for a catarrh. But who could play with it ? Who could tweak it passionately, as a prelude to kissing ? Who could linger over it tenderly with a candle, or a lump of mutton fat, when cold had laid its cruel hand upon it ? It is not tip-tilted like a flower ; it is not whimsical with some ravishing and unexpected little crook. It is straight, like a mathematical line. But it has no parts. Her cheeks are round and fair. Each has its dimple

and blush. They are thoroughly healthy. Mrs. Smith's digestion is unexceptionable. You might indicate the contour of these cheeks with a pair of compasses; you might paint them with your thumb. Poor Mrs. Smith's talk, or babble rather, is of her husband, her children, her home. It is a mere purring over them. She never cuts them to pieces, and holds them up to scorn and mockery. She never penetrates their weaknesses. She does not even understand that Smith is a common-place, stereotyped kind of fellow, exactly like hundreds of other men in his class. She does not appear to notice the ghastly defects in his education, tastes, and character, which gape before all the world else. She does not see that he is without the *morbidezza* of culture; that he finds no *appogiatura* in art; that he never rises at midnight, amid lightning and rain, to emit an inarticulate cry of aesthetic anguish in some metrical construction of the renaissance period. She does not miss in him that yearning after the unattainable, which in some mysterious wise fills us with a mute despair; which has in it yet I know not what of sweetness amid the delirious aspirations with which

it distracts us. She cannot know, with her base instincts dragging her down to the hearth-level of home and child, the material gracelessness of her husband, equally incapable of striking an Anglo-Saxon, or a mediæval attitude; and with his blood flushed, healthy face unable to realise in his expression that divine sorrow which can alone distinguish the man of culture from ordinary Englismen, or the anthropoid apes. She will never know what vibrates so harshly on us—the want of feeling for colour which is displayed in the coarse tone of his brown hair. So in regard to her children the mind of Mrs. Smith is quite uncritical. Look at that baby, like a thousand other babies you see everyday. It has not a single idiosyncracy on which any one above the intellectual level of a *crétin* could hang an affection. Its porcine eyes twinkle dimly through rolls of fat; it splutters and puffs, and its habits are simply abominable. What a gross home for that life's star, which hath had elsewhere its setting and cometh from afar! The star is quenched in fat: it has exchanged the music of the spheres for a hideous caterwauling! Yet Mrs. Smith loves that child, and gobbles

over it, descending to its abysses of grossness. Her house is one of many in a long unlovely street: it is furnished according to the most corrupt dictates of bestial Philistinism—that is, with a view to comfort. There are no subtle harmonies in the papers and chintzes; there are no hidden suggestions of form and tone in the cornices and bell handles; all is barren of proportion, concord, and meaning. Still this poor woman, with her inartistic eye and foolish heart, loves this wretched shelter, and would pour out her idiotic tears if she were leaving it for Paradise.

But if we descend from our aesthetic heights to the lowly level of the biped Smith, we may see Mrs. S. in a totally different atmosphere, and certain lights and shadows will play about her with a radiance not altogether without beauty. She is a single-minded woman, anxious to make her husband and children comfortable and happy in their home,—and dreaming of nothing beyond this. She is full of homely wisdom; a hundred little economies she practises with forethought and unwearying assiduity tend to make her husband and children love her and regard her

as a paragon of domestic policy. Her husband's affection and her children's affection are all the world to her; music and painting and poetry, Mr. Ruskin, Phidias, Praxiteles, Holman Hunt, and Mr. Whistler pale away into the shadows of shadows in presence of the indications of love she receives from that baby. And this intense single-minded love elevates her within its own compass. She sees in that baby's eyes the light that never was on sea or land, the consecration and the mother's dream. She broods over it till she effects for it in her own maternal fancy an apotheosis; and round its image in her heart there glows a bright halo of poetry. She sees through the fat. The grossness disappears before her rapt gaze. There remains the spirit fresh from heaven :—

> Sweet spirit newly come from Heaven
> With all the God upon thee, still
> Beams of no earthly light are given
> Thy heart e'en yet to bless and fill.
> Thy soul a sky whose sun has set,
> Wears glory hovering round it yet;
> And childhood's eve glows sadly bright
> Ere life hath deepened into night.

So with the husband; so with the home; a

glory gathers round them, which she alone, the intense worshipper, sees ; and this unaesthetic Mrs. Smith, altogether unsatisfactory to the artistic eye, most practical, most commonplace, carries within her some of the Promethean flame, and is worthy of that halo of homely joy and affection with which she is crowned.

No. XXXV.

SAHIB.

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SAHIB.

(*February* 19, 1880.)

I FIRST met him driving home from cutcherry in his buggy. He was a fat man in the early afternoon of life. In his blue eyes lay the mystery of many a secret salad and unwritten milk-punch; but though he smoked the longest cheroots of Trichinopoly and Dindigul, his hand was still steady and still grasped a cue or a long tumbler, with the unerring certainty of early youth and unshaken health.

Of an evening he would come over to my bungalow in a friendly way; he would "just drop in," as he used to say, in his pleasant offhand fashion, and he would irrigate himself with my brandy and soda, amid genial smiles and a brandishing of his long cheroot, play-

fully indicating his recognition of a stimulent with which he had been long acquainted.

As he began to glow with conversation and brandy, he would call for cards and play ecarté with me, until the room gradually resolved itself into one of the circles of some Californian Inferno, with a knave of spades digging the diamonds out of my heart and clubbing my trumps.

He would leave me throbbing with the eructation of oaths and the hollow aching of an empty purse, and uncertain whether to give up cards and liquor for hymns and Government paper or whether to call him back and take fortune by storm. But he had gone off with a resolute "good night" that tended to dispel illusions; he had gone to his own No. 1 Exshaw and his French novels, which he read as he lay on his solitary bachelor couch.

Yes,—his bachelor couch; for he was not married. He had loved much and often. He had loved a great many people in different stations of life; but they did not marry him. He was, upon the whole, glad that they did not marry him; for they were often married to other people and he would have been lonely

with one, dissatisfied with two, and embarrassed with more; so he continued his austere bachelor life; and always tried to love unostentatiously somebody else's wife.

He loved somebody else's wife, because he had no wife of his own, and the heart requires love. It was very wrong of him to love somebody else's wife and to sponge thus on affections which belonged to another; but then he had nothing puritanical or pharisaical in his nature; he was too highly cultivated to be moral, and arguing the point in the mood of sweet *Barbara*, he had often succeeded in persuading pretty women that he did right in loving them, though their household duties belonged to another.

I have said that he was too highly cultivated to be religious. He was exceedingly emotional and intellectual; and the procrustean bed of a creed would have been intolerable torture to him. Life throbbed around him in an aurora of skittles. The world of morality only raised a languid smile, or tickled an appetite pleased with novelty. An archdeacon, or a book of sermons delighted him. He would play with them and ponder over them, as if they were

old China, or curious etchings. But he was never profane, especially before bishops, or children, and he always went to church on Sunday morning.

He went to church on Sunday morning, because it was quaint and old-fashioned to do so, and because he loved to see the women of his acquaintance in their devotional moods and attitudes. There was hardly any mood or attitude in which he did not love to see a woman, partly because he was full of human sympathy and tenderness, and partly for other reasons. I suppose he was a student of human nature, though he always repudiated the notion of being a student of anything. He said that life was too short for serious study, and that every kind of pursuit should be tempered with fooling; while to prevent fooling becoming wearisome it should always be dashed with something earnest, as the sodawater is dashed with brandy, or the Government of India with Mr. Whitley Stokes.

> Nigrorum memor, dum licet, ignium,
> Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem :
> Dulce est desipere in loco.

But besides being a man of pleasure and a

capital billiard player, he was a Collector in the North-Western Provinces, a man who sat at the receipt of custom under a punkah, and read his *Pioneer*. The Lord High Cockalorum at Nynee Tal, Sir Somebody Thingmajig,—I am speaking of years ago—did not like him, I believe, but nobody thought any the worse of him for this; and although he continued to be a Collector until the shades of evening, when all his contemporaries had retired into the Dreamland of Commissionerships,—he still loved and was loved; and to the very last he read his French novels and quoted Horace, sitting peacefully on the bank while the stream of promotion rolled on, knowing well that it would roll on *in omne aevum*,—and not caring a jot whether it did, or did not. What was a seat at the Sadr Board to him, a seat among the solemn mummies of the service? He would not object to lie in the same graveyard with them; but to sit at the same board while this sensible warm motion of life still continued was too much; this could never be. He belonged to a higher order of spirits; as a boy he had not bartered the music of his soul for eastern languages and the Rent

Law ; and as an old man he would not sit in state with corpses faintly animated by rupees.

To the last he mocked promotion ; he mocked, till the dread mocker laid mocking fingers on his liver, and till gibe and laughter were silenced for ever more. So the Collector died, the merry Collector, and "where shall we bury the merry Collector?" became the last problem for his friends to deal with. I was in far away lands at the time with another friend of his—we mourned for the Collector.

We would have buried him in soft summer weather under sweet arbute trees, near the shore of some murmuring Italian sea. The west wind should whisper its grief over his grave for ever :—

"Thou who did'st waken from his summer-dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,
Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers."

Blue-eyed girls would have bound his dear

head with garlands of the amorous rosemary. The echoes of sea-caves would have chanted requiems until time should be no more. Embalmed in darkness the nightingale would nightly for ever pour forth her soul in profuse strains of inconsolable ecstasy; by day the dove should moan in the flickering shade until the sun should cease to roll on his fiery path:—

"Where through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die under the willow.
There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There thy rest should'st thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake: never, O never!"

With tender hand we would have traced on his memorial urn some valediction—not without hope—of love and friendship.

It was otherwise. He was buried during a dust-storm in a loathsome Indian cemetery. No friend stood by the grave. A hard priest reluctantly pattered an abbreviated service:

and people whispered that it was not well with the Collector's soul. He is now forgotton.

But, dear friend, thy memory blossoms in my heart for ever, thy merry laugh will still sound in my ear :—

" Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail."

No. XXXVI.

THE GAIETY THEATRE.

A COPY OF VERSES.

No. XXXVI.

THE GAIETY THEATRE.

(*March* 3, 1880.)

MISS EDITH WILSON AS THE EARL OF LEICESTER.

Amy Robsart, she is right,
The knowing little wight !
When that charming Earl of Leicester's hand she begs ;
She knows how rough his arms
Are ; but thinks of other charms.
Far better is the fashion of his legs.

At his arms you well may laugh,
A bear and ragged staff !
Such the real Lord of Leicester would display ;
But not so our burlesque Earl,
A divinely moulded girl,
Who is fashioned in a very different way.

Her arms are tears and smiles,
And delightful little wiles ;
Her supporters are the Public and the Press,
And a pair of calves and feet
That indeed are very meet
To be playfully uncovered by her dress.

Her garter and her star
And her martial swagger are
A knight-at-arms depicted to the life ;
But a carpet-knight at heart,
She could play another part,
And make a very charming little wife.

A. B.

No. XXXVII.

A SONNET.

No. XXXVII.

A SONNET.

(*March* 4, 1880.)

HER face was very fair to see
Her smiles were kind, her tears most true.
Full sweetly would she smile on you ;
But all her love belonged to me.

Courteous, and free from vanity,
Mere strangers meeting her would say :
" How bright and winning is her way ! "
Charmed with her sweet humanity.

But she is gone : we dwell apart
For ever more. Is she in Hell ?
Can the Theologians tell ?

Little of their lore ; but the whole
Creed, she knew, of a loving heart.
Say then, ye Gospellers, where is her soul ?

A. B.

No. XXXVIII.

THE GRYPHON'S ANABASIS.

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THE GRYPHON'S ANABASIS.

(*March* 29, 1880.)

For some days the moustaches had been assuming a fiercer curl; more and more troopers had been added to the escort; the Lord whispered in the unreluctant ear softer and softer nothings; the scarlet runners bowed lower and lower; and it was rumoured that the Lord had given the Gryphon a pot of his own club-mutton hair-grease. It would be a halo. This development of glory must have a limit: a feeling got abroad that the Gryphon must go.

The Commander-in-Chief would come up to him bathed in smiles and say nothing; at other

times with tears in his eyes he would swear with far resounding, multitudinous oaths to accompany the Gryphon. One day Wolseley's pocket-book and a tooth brush would be packed in tin; next day they would be unpacked. The vacillation was awful; it amounted to an agony; it involved all the circles; the newspapers were profoundly moved.

The Gryphon starts. Editors forget their proofs; Baboos forget Moses; mothers forget their cicisbeos. The mind of Calcutta is turned upon the Gryphon. A thousand blue eyes and ten thousand black focus him. He takes his seat. A double-first class carriage has been reserved. The Superintendent-General of Balloons and Fireworks appears on the platform: the Gryphon steps out, takes precedence of him, and then returns to his carriage. The excitement increases. Prepaid telegrams are flashed to Bombay, Madras, Allahabad, and Lahore; the engine whistles "God save the Queen-Empress and the Secretary to the Punjab Government;" and the train pours out its glories into the darkness.

My Lord is deeply stirred. He believes

the Asian mystery has been solved. He returns to Government House and gives vent to his over-wrought feelings in smoke—Parascho cigarettes ; then he telegraphs himself to sleep. Dreams sweep over him, issuing from the fabled gates of shining ivory.

Meanwhile the Gryphon speeds on, yearning like a god in pain for his far away aphelion in Kabul. Morning bashfully overtakes him ; and the train dances into stations festooned with branches of olive and palm. A *feu-de-joie* of champagne corks is fired ; special correspondents in clean white trousers enliven the scene ; Baron Reuter's ubiquitous young man turns on rapturous telegrams ; and a faint smile dawns darkly on the Gryphon's scorn-worn face.

Merrily shrieks the whistling engine as the Punjab comes sliding down the round world to welcome its curled darling. It spurns with contemptuous piston the vulgar corn-growing provinces of Couper ; it seeks the fields that are sown with dragon's teeth ; it hisses forward with furious joy, like the flaming chariot of some Heaven-booked Prophet. Already Egerton anticipates its welcome advent. He can hardly

sit still on his pro-consular throne; he smiles in dockets and demi-officials; he walks up and down his alabaster halls, and out into his gardens of asphodel and snuffs the air. It is redolent with some rare effluvium; pomatum-laden winds breathe across the daffadown dillies from the warm chambers of the south. A cloud crosses His Honor's face, a summer cloud dissolving into sunshine. "It is the pomade of Saul:—but it is our own glorious David whose unctuous curls, carry the Elysian fragrance." Then taking up his harp and dancing an ecstatic measure, he sings—

"He is coming, my Gryphon, my swell;
Were it ever so laden with care,
My heart would know him, and smell
The grease in his coal-black hair."

The whole of the Punjab is astir. Deputy Commissioners, and Extra Assistant Commissioners, and Kookas, and Sikhs, and Mazhabi-Sikhs crowd the stations; but the Gryphon passes fiercely onwards. The light of battle is now in his eye; he is in uniform; a political sword hangs from his divine waist; a looking-glass poses itself before him. Life burns wildly

in his heart: time throbs along in hot seconds; Eternity unfolds around her far-receding horizons of glory.

The train emits telegrams as it hurls itself forward:—"the Gryphon is well:—he is in the presence of his Future:—History watches him:—he is drinking a peg:—the *Civil and Military Gazette* has caught a glimpse of him:—glory, glory, glory, to the Gryphon, the mock turtle is his wash-pot, over Lyall will he cast his shoe."

Earthquakes are felt all along the line from Peshawar to Kabul. Strings of camels laden with portmanteaus stretch from the rising to the setting sun. The whole of the Guides and Bengal Cavalry have resolved themselves into orderlies and are riding behind the Gryphon. Tens of thousands of insurgents are lining the road and making holiday to see the Gryphon pass.

Kabul is astir. Roberts with bare feet and a rope round his neck comes forward, performs *Kadam-bosi* and presents the keys of Sherpur to the Gryphon, who hands them graciously to his Extra Assistant Deputy Khidmatgar General. The wires are red hot with messages: "The

Gryphon is taking a pill; the Gryphon is bathing; the Gryphon is breakfasting; the Gryphon is making a joke; the Gryphon has been bitten by a flea; the wound is not pronounced dangerous, he is recovering slowly:—Glory, glory to the Gryphon—Amen, amen!"

YOUR POLITICAL ORPHAN.

No. XXXIX.

THE ORPHAN'S GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

No. XXXIX.

THE ORPHAN'S GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

(*June* 8, 1880.)

Part I.—Persons I will try to avoid.
„ II.—Things I will try to avoid.
„ III.—Habits I will try to avoid.
„ IV.—Opinions I will try to avoid.
„ V.—Circumstances I will try to avoid.

PART I.—BAD COMPANY.

PERSONS I WILL TRY TO AVOID.

1.

HE has a villa in the country; but his place of business is in town; somewhere near Sackville Street. Vulgarity had marked him for her

own at an early age. She had set her mark indelibly on his speech, his manners, and his habits. When ten years old he had learned to aspirate his initial vowels ; when twelve he had mastered the whole theory and practice of eating cheese with his knife ; at seventeen his mind was saturated with ribald music of the Vaudeville type.

Reader, you anticipate me?—You suppose I refer to one of Mr. Gladstone's new Ministers, or to one of Lord Beaconsfield's new Baronets ?

You are, of course, mistaken. My man is a tailor ; one of the best tailors in the world. He has made hundreds of coats for me ; and he has sent me hundreds of circulars and bills.

Now, however, he has lost my address and there seems to be a coolness between us. We stand aloof ; the scars remaining.

His name is Sartor, and I owe him a good deal of money.

2.

He is always up in the Hills when the weather is unpleasant on the plains. Butterfly-collecting, singing to a guitar passionate songs of love and hate, and lying the live-long day on a long chair with a long tumbler in his

hand and a volume of Longfellow on the floor are his most characteristic pursuits. It is needless to say that he is the Accountant-General, and the last man in the world to suppose that I have given myself ten days' privilege leave to the Hills on urgent private affairs,—*affairs de coeur*, and *affairs de rien*, of sorts.

3.

His head is shaved to the bone; his face, of the Semitic type, is most sinister, truculent and ferocious; his filthy Afghan rags bristle with knives and tulwars. He carries five or six matchlocks under one arm and a hymn book, or Koran, under the other. He is in holy orders—a Ghazi! A pint, or a pint and a half, of my blood, would earn for him Paradise, with sharab, houris and all the rest of it.

4.

He was once an exceedingly pleasant fellow, full of talk and anecdote. We were at school together. He was captain of our eleven and at the head of the sixth form. I looked up to him; quoted him; imitated him; lent him my pocket money. Afterwards a great many other people

lent him their money too and played écarté with him; yet at no period of his life was he rich, and now he is decidedly poor. Still the old love of borrowing money and playing écarté burns hectically in his bosom, and with years a habit of turning up the king has grown upon him. No one likes to tell him that he has acquired this habit of turning up the king; he is so poor!

5.

SHE was rather nice looking once, and I amused myself with fancying that I loved her. She was to me the summer pilot of an empty heart unto the shores of nothing. It was then that I acquired that facility in versification which has since so often helped to bind a book, or line a box, or served to curl a maiden's locks. She learned reams of those verses by heart, and still repeats them. Her good looks and my illusions have passed away: but those verses—those thrice accursed verses remain. How they make my ears tingle! How they burn my cheeks! Will time, think you, never impair her infernal memory?

6.

I LISP a little, it is true;—but thank good-

ness, no longer in numbers. I only lisp a little when any occasion arises to utter sibilant sounds; on such occasions this little girl, the only child of her mother, and she a widow, mimics my infirmity. The widow is silly and laughs nervously, as people with a fine sense of humour laugh in church when a book falls. This laugh of the widow's is not easy to bear; for she is pretty. Were she not pretty her mocking child would come, I ween, to some untimely end.

7.

My Lord is, more or less, admired by two or three young ladies I know; and when he puts his arm round my neck and drags me up and down a crowded ball-room I cannot help wishing that they were in the pillory instead of me. I really wish to be polite to H. E., but how can I say that I think he was justified in finessing his deficit and playing surpluses? How can I agree with him when he says that Abdur Rahman will come galloping in to Kabul to tender his submission as soon as he receives Mr. Lepel Griffin's photograph neatly wrapped up in a Post Office Order for two lakhs of rupees? And then that Star of India he is

always pressing on me! As I say to him,—what should I do with it?

I can't go hanging things round my neck like King Coffee Calcalli, or the Emperor of Blue China.

But soon it will not be difficult for me to avoid my Lord: for

"Sic desideriis icta fidelibus
Quaerit patria Caesarem."

8.

He still smiles when we meet; and I don't think any the less of him because he was called "Bumble" at school and afterwards made Governor of Bombay. Men drift unconsciously into these things. But when I happen to be near him he has a nervous way of lunging with his stick and muttering strange oaths. It is this that I can't quite get over. They say he once dreamt that I had poked fun at him in a newspaper; and the hallucination continues to produce an angry aberration of his mind, coupled with gnashing of the teeth and other dangerous symptoms.

9.

He is a huge gob of flesh, which is perhaps

animated dimly by some spark of humanity smouldering filthily in a heart cancerous with money-grubbing. His whole character and mode of life stink with poisonous exhalations in my moral nostrils. Nature denounces, in her loud commination service, his clammy hand, his restless eye, his sinister and bestial mouth. Why should he waken me from the dreams of literature and the low music of my own reflections to disgorge from the cesspool of his mind the impertinent questions and the loathsome compliments which form his notion of conversation? He has come "to pay his respects." I abhor "his respects." He is rich:— What is that to me? He is powerful with all the power of corruption: I scorn his power, I figuratively spit upon it. He is perhaps the man whom the Government delights to honŏr. More shame to the Government! A bully at home and a tyrant among his own people, on all sides dastardly and mean, he is a bad representative of a gentle and intellectual race, that for its heroic traditions, its high thoughts, its noble language, and its exquisite urbanity has been

the wonder of the whole world since the dawn of history.

10.

A COCKED hat, a tailcoat with gold buttons and a rapier:—"See'st thou not the air of the court in these enfoldings? Hath not his gait in it the measure of the court? Receives not thy nose court-odour from him? Reflects he not on thy baseness court-contempt?" Observe how mysterious he is: consider the secrets burning on his tongue. He is all asides and whispers and winks and nods to other young popinjays of the same feather. He could tell you the very brand of the pills the Raja is taking: he receives the paltriest gossip of the Nawab's Court filtered through a lying vakeel. Ten to one he carries in his pocket a cipher telegram from Simla empowering him to confer the title of *Jee* on some neighbouring Thakor. Surely it is no wonder that he believes himself to be the hub of creation. Within a radius of twenty miles there is no one even fit to come between the wind and his nobility. If he should ever catch hold of you by the arm and take you aside for a moment from the madding crowd of a lawn-tennis party to whisper in

your ear the arrival of a complimentary *Kharita* and a pound of sweetmeats from the Foreign Office for the Jam of Bredanbatta you should let off smiles and blushes in token of the honour and glory thus placed at your credit.

11.

All Assistant-Magistrates on their first arrival in this country, stuffed like Christmas turkeys with abstracts and notes, the pemmican of school boy learnings are more or less a weariness and a bore ; but the youth who comes out from the admiring circle of sisters and aunts with the airs of a man of the world and the blight of a premature *ennui* is peculiarly insufferable. Of course he has never known at home any grown-up people beyond the chrysalis stage of undergraduatism, except to receive from them patronising hospitalities and little attentions in the shape of guineas and stalls at the opera, such as good natured seniors delight to show to promising young kinsmen and friends. Yet his talk is of the studio, the editor's room, and the Club ; it is flavored with the *argot* of the great world, the half world and Bohemia ; he flings great names in your face, dropping with a sublime familiarity

the vulgar prefixes of 'Mr.' and 'Lord,' and he overwhelms you with his knowledge of women and their wicked ways. Clever Ouida with her tawdry splendours, her guardsmen, her peers, her painters and her Aspasias, and the "society papers" with their confidences and their personalities have much to answer for in the case of this would-be man of the world.

No. XL.

SOME OCCULT PHENOMENA.

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SOME OCCULT PHENOMENA.

(*October* 21, 1880.)

THERE were thirteen of them, and they sat down to dinner just as the clock in the steeple chimed midnight. The sheeted dead squeaked and gibbered in their graves ; the owl hooted in the ivy. "For what we are going to receive may the Secret Powers of Nature and the force of circumstances make us truly thankful," devoutly exclaimed the domestic medium. The spirits of Chaos and Cosmos rapped a courteous acknowledgment on the table. Potage à la sorcière (after the famous recipe in Macbeth) was served in a cauldron ; and while it was being handed round, Hume recited his celebrated argument regarding miracles. He had hardly reached the twenty-fifth hypothesis, when a sharp cry startled the

company, and Mr. Cyper Redalf, the eminent journalist, was observed to lean back in his chair, pale and speechless. His whole frame was convulsed with emotion ; his hair stood erect and emitted electro-biological sparks. The company sat aghast. A basin of soup dashed in his face and a few mesmeric passes soon brought him round, however ; and presently he was able to explain to the assembled carousers the cause of his agitation. It was a recollection, a tender memory of youth. The umbrella of his boyhood had suddenly surged upon his imagination ! It was an umbrella from which he had been parted for years : it was an umbrella round which had once centred associations solemn and mysterious. In itself there had been nothing remarkable about the umbrella. It was a gingham, conceived in the liberal spirit of a bygone age ; such an umbrella as you would not easily forget when it had once fairly bloomed on the retina of your eye ; yet an everyday umbrella, a commonplace umbrella half a century ago ; an umbrella that would have elicited no remark from our great grandmothers, hardly a smile from our grandmothers ; but an umbrella

well calculated to excite the affections and stimulate the imagination of an impulsive, high spirited, and impressionable boy. It was an umbrella not easily forgotten; an umbrella that necessarily produced a large and deep impression on the mind.

All present were profoundly moved; a feeling of dismay crept over them, defacing their festivity. Tears were shed. Only from one pair of damp eye did any gleam of hope or comfort radiate.

A distinguished foreigner, well-known in the uttermost spirit-circles, wiped from his brow drops of perspiration which some dream had loosened from his brain. He felt the tide of psychic force beating upon the high shores of his heart. He was conscious of a constitutional change sweeping like a tempest over his protoplastic tissue. He felt that the secret fountains of his being were troubled by the angel of spirit-rapping, and that his gross, unbelieving nature stepped down, bathed, and was healed. The Moses of the spirit-wilderness struck the rock, of his material life, and occult dynamics came welling forth from the undiscovered springs of consciousness.

His mortal statics lost their equilibrium in a general flux of soul. A cyclone raged round his measmeric aura. He began to apprehend an epiphany of electro-biological potentiality. The fierce light that never was in kerosine or tallow dawned round him; matter melted like mist; souls were carousing about him; the great soul of nature brooded like an aurora of clairvoyance above all; his awful mediumhood held him fiercely in her mystic domination; and things grew to a point. From the focus of the clairvoyant aurora clouds of creative impulse gathered, and sweeping soulward were condensed in immaterial atoms upon the cold peaks of Purpose. Thus a spiritual gingham impressed upon his soul of souls a matrix, out of which, by a fine progenitive effort, he now begets and ejects a materialised gingham into a potato-plot of the garden without.

The thing is patent to all who live above the dead-level of vulgar imbecility. No head of a department could fail to understand it. Indeed, to such as live on the uplands of speculation not only is the process lucid in itself, but it is luciferous, illuminating all the obscure

hiding-places of Nature. It is the magic-lantern of creation ; it is the key to all mysticism, to the three-card trick, and to the basket-trick ; it sheds a glory upon thimble-rigging, a halo upon legerdemain ; it even radiates vagabond beams of splendour upon pocket-picking and the cognate arts. It explains how the apples get into the dumpling ; how the milk comes out of the cocoa-nut ; how the deficit issues from the surplus ; how matter evolves itself from nothing. It rènders the hypothesis of a First Cause not only unnecessary, but exquisitely ludicrous. Under such dry light as it offers to our intelligence the whole epos of Christianity seems a vapid dream.

But I anticipate conclusions. We must go back to the dinner-party and to Mr. Cyper Redalf, who has been restored to consciousness, and who still is the object of general sympathy ; for it is not until the disturbance in the distinguished foreigner's nerve aura has amounted to a psychic cyclone that the company perceive his interesting condition, and begin to look for a manifestation. The hopes of some fondly turn to raps, others desire the pressure of a spirit

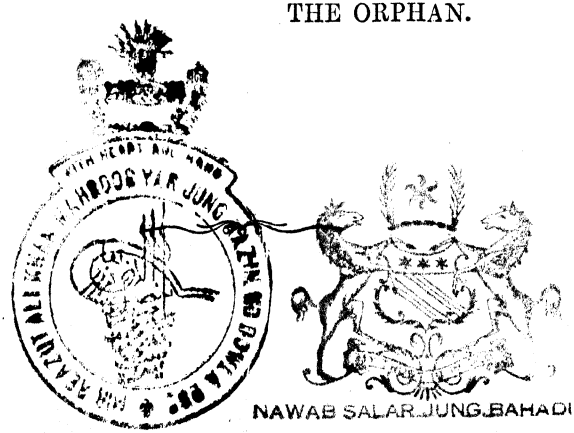
hand, or the ringing of a bell, or the levitation of furniture, or the sound of a spirit voice, the music of an immaterial larynx. Dinner is soon forgotten: the thing has become a seance, hands are joined, the lights are instinctively lowered, and the whole company, following an irresistible impulse, march round and round the room, and then out into the darkness after the soul-stirred foreigner, after the foreigner of distinction. Is it unconscious cerebration that leads them to the potato plot, or is it the irresistible influence of some Supreme Power, something more occult and more interesting than God, that compels them to fall on their knees, and grub with their hands in the recently-manured potato bed? I must leave this question unanswered, as a sufficiently occult explanation does not occur to me: but suffice it to say that this search after truth, this burrowing in the gross earth for some spiritual sign appears to me a spectacle at once inspiring and touching. It seems to me that human life has seldom had anything more beautiful and more ennobling to show than these postmaster-generals, boards of revenue, able editors, and foreigners of distinction asking Truth, the Everlasting

Verity, for a sign, and then searching for it in a potato-field. In this glorious quest every circumstance demands our respectful attention. They search on their hands and knees in the attitude of passionate prayer; they search in the dark; they seize the dumb earth with delirious fingers; they knock their heads against one another and against the dull, hard trunks of trees. Still they search: they wrestle with the Earth: she must yield up her secrets. Nor will Earth deny to them the desired boon. Theirs is the true spirit of devout enquiry, and they are persons of consideration in evening-dress. Nature will unveil her charms. Earth with the groans of an infinite pain, a boundless travail, yields up the gingham umbrella.

We will not intrude upon their immediate rapture as they carry their treasure away with loving hands; but it is necessary to note the means taken to prove, for the satisfaction only of a foolish and unbelieving world, the supernatural nature of the phenomenon. The umbrella is examined under severe test conditions: it is weighed in a vacuum, and placed under the spectroscope. It is found to be porous

and a conductor of heat; but it is not soluble in water, though it boils at 500° Fahr. To demonstrate the absence of trickery or collusion everyone turns up his sleeves and empties his waistcoat pockets. There is no room for slight of hand in presence of this searching scientific investigation. The umbrella *is* certainly *not* a suppositious umbrella; yet it is the umbrella of Mr. Cyper Redalf's boyhood. No one can doubt this who sees him clasp it in a fond embrace, who sees him shed burning tears on its voluminous folds.

THE ORPHAN.



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